

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Mikulas Judikovic
April 7, 1997
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PREFACE

The following oral history testimony is the result of a recorded interview with Mikulas Judikovic, conducted on April 7, 1997 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

MIKULAS JUDIKOVIC
April 7, 1997

Question: This is a **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with **Mikulas Judikovic**, conducted by **Sidney Bolkosky**, on April 7th, 1997, at Mr. **Judikovic's** home in **Southfield, Michigan**. This is tape number one, side **A**. Could you tell me your name please, when you were born?

Answer: My name is **Mikulas Judikovic**, in Slovak. I was born October the 26th, 1919 in a village called **Cecehov**. It's on the outskirts of **Michalovce**, about four miles from **Michalovce**, three and a half miles.

Q: And this was in **Czechoslovakia** when you were born?

A: And this was in **Czechoslovakia**.

Q: Tell me a little bit about **Michalovce**.

A: **Michalovce** was a city where it was – there belongs many villages in the outskirts of **Michalovce**. And the Jewish community was very large, it was almost 3,000 Jews. The city by itself had about 15,000 people. There were about six synagogues [indecipherable] smaller, two big one. They were ash – the two big one were Ashkenazis. The smaller one – one, strict Orthodox, or less Orthodox, small synagogue. And the synagogue where I belonged were about – the membership, about 300 people, 350 people – families. We had a cantor, steady cantor and a rabbi. We had a choir in our shul. By the way, here in **Detroit** lived Cantor **Fuchs(ph)**,

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who was a member, like a little boy in the choir in our shul. And I met him about 10 years ago here in **Detroit**. He died last year.

Q: Was your family –

A: From – from the – about 3,000 people, ab – approximately 120 people came back, all of the – all of the rest perished in the concentration camps.

Q: Was your family religious?

A: My family was strictly religious. We had kosher households, and my father re – my special ri – my grandfather lived with our ho – in our house until year 1929 or 1930. When he died, he was 83 years old. He was very reli – religious, he was wearing a beard. And a-at home I spoke with him only Yiddish. With my siblings and my parents, most of the time we spoke Hungarian or Slovak.

Q: How many languages did you – were – were there in your household? You spoke Slovak, Hungarian, Yiddish. Anything else?

A: No.

Q: Wha-What do you remember about your grandfather, anything else?

A: My grandfather was very, very familiar with the family [**indecipherable**] loved very much his grandchildren, and he was very happy because the two older sister – I was the third child, and the first two children were girls. And he was very happy when I was born, because finally, he said [**indecipherable**] but a boy, my

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eynikle(ph). So he was very happy, and I think even the other – my other brother was born – one bro – was – brother was born in 1921, but he died in 1920 fo – five, of leukemia, I think, if I took what to – illnesses of today. Then the other ma – bro – brother was born in 1924, he disap – he died in concentration camp, he was 18 years old. So ma – still my grandfather la – I – he was – I was his lovely child, because I was the first born boy, and he couldn't happier than – I have to, like a little boy, to have to fast Erev Pesach like a first born boy. So he was very religious, and that we had all the time kosher household, even during the war when it was very hard, and he wasn't more – alive any more, but my family, my parents were used to keep the kosher household, si – we were holding til the last moment.

Q: So the family was you, two sisters –

A: Then – the other two sisters were born – the one sister was born then in 1927.

Q: And what was her name?

A: **Haide(ph)** was born in 1927, and **Lola** was born in 1929.

Q: You said there were older sisters.

A: The two older sisters, the one was born in 1917, he – no, she died in concentration camp with her husband and three small children.

Q: And what was her name?

A: **Clari(ph)**. The other sister was born in 1918, she lives in **Toledo**.

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Q: **Toledo**. And – and you have one more sister, who lives in **Detroit** as well.

A: I have two sisters here in **Detroit**.

Q: So – so how large is the family all together in your household then, living together. You had you, your – your two older sisters, your brother –

A: The older sister leaved the – our house in 1936, when she was married, and she lived in a village not far from **Michalovce**, and my other sister **Lily**, who lives in **Toledo**, my father managed to get some papers and get her out with the last boat in 1939 from **Germany** to **America**, because my father has these siblings. He had three brothers and two sisters here in the **United States**, who came to this country in the 1920s, so she came here in 1939, really.

Q: And what was your father's name?

A: My father's name was **Mark**.

Q: And – and how many – how many brothers and sisters – how many aunts and uncles were there in – from your father's side? Your – your aunts and uncles.

A: Here in the **United States**, if I am not mistaken, altogether about five or six uncles and aunts.

Q: And any – did any stay in – in **Czechoslovakia**? Any of his siblings?

A: No.

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Q: They all came here. What about your mother's si – your mu – what was your mother's name?

A: My mother's name was **Malvina**, and she had – I have to think how many sisters she had. Sh-She had about seven or eight sisters and brothers in **Czechoslovakia**, none of them in the **United States**, and most of them, actually all of them, died in concentration camp. Nobody survived [**indecipherable**]

Q: And they had children as well? You had cousin?

A: Yeah, my – my mother's sibling – brothers and sist – had children. Mo – many of them survived, they live mo – many of them in **Chicago**, then in **California**, some of them.

Q: If you had to estimate the – the extended family, how large would you say?

Aunts, uncles, first cousins, just the first cousins.

A: I can count that cousin – ainkle – uncles, aunts and cousin, about 35 or 38 who perished in concentration camps. After the war, survived about 10. I mean, cousins.

Q: And in ma – in me – in **Michalovce**, what did your father do?

A: My father was a broker with cattles. And he usually bought – he had people who are buying for him cattles and – how you call the small sheeps?

Q: Lambs.

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A: Lambs, lambs. And they were slaughtering there **Michalovce** – near **Michalovce**, and sending every week to **Prague**, to the capitol of **Czechoslovakia**, and he used to actually to travel almost every week to **Prague** where he was – he has his stall there, and he was selling there in **Prague**. So he wa – he had his apartment in **Prague** because many times he was staying there four or five days. And he had a yearly ticket to **Prague** by train because he was so often there. And usually when he came back from **Prague**, he usually always brought some presents for the children. He was very – both my parents, but especially my father, because he had – he could afford – he had brought always from **Prague** small gifts for us, for the children, and for my mother, too. And usually Sunday morning, used to come to our hose – house, the people from the villages who used to buy for him all those cattles and so on, and he was paying them. So many people remembered him very well. Even here in **Detroit** for example, **Sidnu(ph) Greenburger**, who is a member of **B'nai Moishe** remembers him very well, and when I came to this country and he taught me here, welcomed me. You know, **Michu(ph)**, because they called me in Hungarian name, if you are a – a human being like your father was, I will tip my hat in front of you [**indecipherable**] because very few people in the world was a fa – a father and a human being like your father, because he actually

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helped survive in **Czechoslov** – in **Michalovce** and the other villages, people who make their living through him.

Q: Non-Jews as well as Jews?

A: Only Jews. Some non-Jews too, because they were like helpers when they – because we – he used to send, almost every week, a whole railroad car full with cattles or lambs, and we had, for example, in **Michalovce**, a big – like a storage place, where during the winter, that people were – we – they used to cut ice from the river and we mare – during the winter we make in this big places, pieces of ice what he used during summertime when we als – he was sending the slaughtered cattles and lambs to **Prague**, so he put in a railroad – railroad car, and it was a one piece of ice – of straw – ice, then the cattles, with – because the bellies were open, they put with the bellies on the ice. Then again, like a –

Q: Layer.

A: – a layer of ice, again with cattles, or lambs, and it was up to the ceiling from one side of the car, and the other side of the car, because it was few hundred. So – and usually it took in the afternoon, they finished it in the afternoon, they put to the – to the ar – ar – ar – ar – the ra – to the – no, no, to the train, and then with the train during the night, and in the morning at eight o'clock it was in **Prague**. So then they delivered immediately from the railroad to the stall where he was selling, and beside

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that, he had even people who were in **Prague** buying from him, the – they were commissioners. So in the one way, he was selling his own merchandise, how to say, cattles, what is left, what the commissioners didn't buy in **Prague** from him.

Q: So – but he did business with non-Jews then?

A: They were Jews.

Q: They were all Jews?

A: The – the commissioner's mainly was – his name I remember, his name was **Vitoslav(ph) Krauss**, and the other one was **Appelus(ph)**, but I don't remember. And it's very interesting that I escaped from **Czechoslovakia** act – in 1968 and '69, after the Russian came in, I went from – I escaped illegally, with two suitcases. I left every [**indecipherable**] everything there for the government. Then [**indecipherable**] were sentenced in absentia to two years in prison because we left illegally – legally they didn't let you. So we left like for vacation. It was very hard to get, because we went from **Czechoslovakia** to **Hungary**, from **Hungary** to – to **Yugoslavia**. From **Yugoslavia** to **Austria**. In **Vienna** we registered in the **HIAS** in the Jewish immigration office. There we stayed about for two weeks, and they send us to **Rome**, to **Italy**, where is the main concentration of refugees, especially of Jewish refugees on the **HIAS**. And by the way, I was there working in **Rome**, we stayed in **Rome** 15 months approximately, because I was working on hire – they

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hired me, after three months I started to speak Italian, because I had learned it in gymnasium when I went, so I learned very easy. So I was working one year in **HIAS** in **Rome**, like an interpreter. So I stayed 15 months, you know – and by the way, I used to go the first time, after 22 years to go to a shul, to a synagogue, because in **Czechoslovakia**, first of all, we to – under communism it was very dangerous to show that you are religious, or you going – secondly, there was no Jews, so I didn't have the opportunity to go. So I went to a little shul there in **Rome**, and suddenly I took a prayer book and I found in the prayer book a card what was a ticket, a steady ticket, a year's ticket for my father for the streetcars in **Prague**. Can you imagine? And I had here the card, not long time ago, and I am very sorry, I cannot find. I was looking, and I don't remember if I gave it to the Holocaust museum here in **Detroit**, or I put somewhere. And I had the card for many years, and I'm sorry, otherwise I would give the card to you, to show that it was – and when I was in **Rome**, and they called me the first time to the – I had – had the **aliyah**, to show – to called me to the Torah. And I was very fluent, I remember, because I wa – go back to how it was in **Czechoslovakia** and was praying. So I said the first **brocha** by the **aliyah** very fluently. And suddenly, when I had to continue, suddenly I stopped and I couldn't get a word from my mouth. And they thought, the people who are standing next to me, they thought that, what's happened? What's

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hap – and it took me about two minutes to ga – get – continue because I was – I was so excited, and for me was – is so something that I cannot imagine, I couldn't imagine that after so many years I'm standing in front of the Torah by a-**aliyah**. So then I told them, so they told me they can understand that. So that what it happened to me in **Rome**. And I wanted only to say that in **Czechoslovakia**, because it was very dangerous to have some prayers or to go to a shul. So I had the prayer book, and my father gave me the idea – we had the drawer in our dresser. And behind the back of the drawer, in the wall, in the back of the dresser was a little space. So I put the prayer book in back of the drawer, and besi – behind the drawer, I put a plywood, so when you opened the drawer, you couldn't see nothing in the back. And from the back I made a little hole, a small hole that you can push down the – the plywood with a wire. So it was a small – and when I opened the drawer and I pushed the – with th-the wire the plywood, so the plywood came down and I took my prayer book. So at least on the high holidays, approximate, I knew where they are, so I was praying, because otherwise what – when my sister escaped from **Czechoslovakia** with her husband in 1948, and then my other sister with her husband in 1950, illegally, and I gave some money out, I helped them. So then it was very dangerous because the police came after me. I was in – even in custody for – for a few days, and they even slapped me because I didn't want to tell them h-

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ho – which way my sister escaped and left **Czechoslovakia**. So, then I – so I knew that was **genderus** – dangerous to pray, so that's way – and I knew that exactly, at least twice during the time in those year, in 1950 - '51, maybe '52, the secret police came during the day when we were in **[indecipherable]** my wife at work, they were checking my a – our apartment for certain things they will find, because – especially my wife, she realized – she opened, for example there, her underwear was, that it was put a different way back, or our other things what we had in our drawers, or in the – in our – in our closet. So that's – we knew exactly they were secretly – they came to our apartment to check, and to make – if they will find something against me. Maybe they were more times than twice, but twice we knew exactly for sure. So when I – they took me many times, about three times I wa – I think, to the secret police, and they were even telling me, if I won't tell how the – my sister went, and what connections I have with my sisters overseas in the west, that they will send me to **Jáchymov**. This was very a dangerous **[indecipherable]** it was uran-uranium – uranium m-mine, that they were sending the worst criminals or politically who are dangerous for them. And most of the people even died then in those mines, or if they after many years they were lucky, came back, their whole – their life – they were sick with – from the uran – from –

Q: Radiation?

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A: From radiation. So I was in very, very danger – so my wife helped me actually, this is – she –

Q: Well, I want to come back and ask you more about this, because this sounds similar to what you went through during the war even. You – you – you said you had – you davened in – in – in **Rome**. So you – you must have had a – a very good –

A: Background.

Q: – education.

A: Background, sure.

Q: [**indecipherable**] you – you went to cheder?

A: Yeah, eight years.

Q: So tell me what – tell me what that was like in – in **Michalovce**.

A: In [**indecipherable**] cheder, that was a different – a little bit like here, because when we started in cheder when I was five and a half years old. So there was different, there in cheder was first grade, second grade, third grade, and each year you were more advanced. For example, your – and our teachers, we call them rabbis. And really, actually, the rabbis have beards and everything. And it was like Orthodox. And in first grade we started to learn the alphabet – the – the **Aleph-Aleph-Bet**. And then to – how to – to daven and how to read. Second gr-grade we

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started to learn a little the **sidrah**, the Torah. Then in third grade we had went and started to learn **harasha**(ph). In fourth grade we started to learn for example **gemura**(ph), and so far [**indecipherable**] **tanakh**. And so, then we came to the seventh grade, actually we were very highly educated in Jewish studies, starting like with this – all the – like I’m saying, the **gemura**(ph), **tanakh** with explanation, with **Russia**, and everything. So when I wa – get Bar Mitzvah, actually I could go almost to learn for a rabbi, really, because I was so highly educated.

Q: But you – you had a – a secular education as well? Y-You – you didn’t – you didn’t only have Jewish education?

A: No, but the ga –

Q: Did you go to public school as well?

A: Yeah, pu – public school. That’s I – I think I mentioned in my – here in that interview.

Q: Well, tell me what – what a day was like when you were – when you were a boy. What would – what would happen?

A: What do you mean, when I started school?

Q: Well, what – would you go to cheder first?

A: Yeah, I went to cheder first, because I started only few months before I started public school, because public school I started when I was six year old.

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Q: So what time of the day would you go to cheder?

A: In cheder, I get up at five o'clock in the morning every day, summer, winter. I took a small, like a can with warm coffee, and this was my – actually mine bread – my – my lunch. And we put – because in this time in cheder we had all – not always, but the heat, we put the wood, and I tell you how to cook –

Q: Stoves.

A: Stoves. So on the top it was – the stove was from metal. So we put on the top of the stove our cans with the coffee. So when we finished, we finished about 7:30, so we took breakfast. We ate the breakfast, and immediately we went across the street to the public school, that started about 8:15. So actually, I had approximately half hour time between finishing in cheder, and going to public school. There I stayed in public school aqu – approximately til 12 o'clock. So I rushed home, 12:15, there I have lunch at home. And quarter to two I went back to the cheder, and stayed about til five o'clock, sometimes 5:30. And in this goes all the time about for seven years. And sometimes in wintertime I went early in the morning in winter, and I had to go through snow to that knee high, and I went to cheder. I don't remember that I didn't want, I don't remember that it was closed because the weather, or something like that. In between this time, specially when I was 10 - 12 years old, I was – liked very much soccer. So between this time, I had to find some

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free time to play soccer too, because behind – we had the big house, two big gardens, with fruit, with vegetables, with everything. So a – and behind the big garden was the soccer field. So actually all my free time I grew up on the soccer field. And especially in later years, after 15 - 16 years old, I played for the club, for there in **Michalovce**, soccer. So, my life from the age five til about 13 was actually 12 hours a day, approximately, cheder and school. Even when I went in high school, when I was 11 years old, it was the same.

Q: When you went to public school, you must have been in school with non-Jews.

A: Oh yeah, the public school –

Q: Did you have any non-Jewish friends?

A: Yeah, because I had neighbors was non-Jewish.

Q: And soccer, you must have played soccer.

A: And soccer, I played soccer with them, but most of my friends were the neighbors, because on our street most of the people, it was about, in our street on the bi – on the beginning of the street were the hospital in **Michalovce**, and after that there were the private houses. There were about maybe 10 houses or eight houses, and most of them were Jewish. So some of the people went with me, the same class, the same school, and some even Christian people, so I had – I had all the friends, Christian and Jews.

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Q: Do you remember any anti-Semitism in school?

A: Not really. Maybe later, years, because I went some years to the gymnasium too, and there was when I was about 15 years old or so, there – here and there, some – between the – the children, between my classmates, here and there was some mention or something, that you are a Jew or something, but not so serious.

Q: No violence.

A: No violence, no, no violence.

Q: What would you had done had it – had the war not come? You went to gymnasium, wha – where would you have gone from there?

A: [**indecipherable**] the gymna – the gymnasium I didn't finish exactly, because I have some – I had a professor who was very, very anti-Semitic. And not only myself, it was two other boys, who had very difficulties to study with him, because he was the principal there in our class for two years. So at – I had very difficult as I understand it even. I had so sharp that he called – he let – called my father that I was – I-I wasn't behave or something. But it really wasn't true because he went very much after Jews, and the other two guys didn't fini – the one didn't finish a year before, in the fourth grade, and the – the second one, his father was very, very rich, so he took him out and sent him to another city, to **Košice**. But my father said, I have no choice, so you know what, better – and he had the friend who had the very

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good store with hardware, and he was willing to take me there. And my father, what his plan was that I will work there like apri – aprinse –

Q: Apprentice.

A: – apprentice for two years, and then he will try somehow, th – the boss where I was working, he will help th – my father, but he will buy for me a small store –

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

Q: – Memorial Museum interview with **Mikulas Judikovic**. This is tape number one, side **B**.

A: So that – probably that he will try to buy for me a store in **[indecipherable]** because I will be familiar, and I will be a partner there, some kind of partnership. But it was later then in 1938 – I started there actually in 1936, I think. I mean, then in 1938 came – the **Czechoslovak Republic** was divided, especially in 1938, we saw what's going on. It was **Kristallnacht** in **Germany**, and so on. So we saw that it was there – there **gender** – danger. So I was continuing to work in this store til 1940, when I went in the labor camp.

Q: I'm – I'm going to ask you about 1938 in a minute. Tell – tell me a little bit more about the household. Wha-What was a Friday night like at your house?

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A: Friday night til the last moment, even when it was the **Slovak Republic**, and we – the family was still at home together, as normally every Friday evening, normal dinner like any Jewish house, with kiddish, with all the – even Saturdays too, Saturday noon, as long as we could afford. I mean, as long as it wasn't so dangerous, especially 1940 and '41, when they started to persecute the Jews, when they came in 1939 or 1940, the all – the laws against the Jews in **Slovakia**, what was actually a copy of the **Nuremberg** laws against the Jews, that the Slovak government accepted to be the same in 1939 - 1940.

Q: This is the **Zidovsky Kodex**?

A: Right. This is **Zidovsky Kodex**, yeah. So then it was very hard, and it was dangerous. So we tried our best, I don't remember exactly for how long, til what year, because that was the situation there.

Q: Wa – was your family aware of the political situation? Did you – you remember **Masaryk**, for example?

A: Oh very well. Masa – **Masaryk** was a pro – professor of philosophy. Actually, he was – the beginning, with his help was established the **Czechoslovak Republic** in 1918, and he died in 1935. After him was the President **Beneš**. He was not – he was maybe a politician, but – but he ra – I think he wa – won – they blame him, and I think rightly so, because he actually – not that he helped, but he was afraid, and he

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sold actually, the **Czechoslovak Republic** in 1938 to **Chamberlain** and to **Hitler**. Because **Chamberlain** came to the **Czechoslovakia**, he made an agreement with **Hitler**, he – **Chamberlain** was very trustworthy, and he carries a piece of paper that **Hitler** guaranteed peace in the – in **Europe**, and guaranteed after the **Sudetenland**, **Czechoslovakia** gave, with the help of **Beneš**, and actually **Chamberlain** was pushing him, gave the **Sudetenland** to **Germany**, and **Hitler** promised that's it, and **Czechoslovakia** [indecipherable]. And **Chamberlain** came to **London**, it was, and even today it's somewhere a tape. He came down from his plane and showed a piece of paper, I brought peace to – to **England**, I brought peace for **Europe**. And he was very much mistaken, but actually, he brought not the peace to **London**, he brought the concentration camps to **London**. He was very naïve.

Q: Do you remember reading about the **Munich** pact in the – in the newspapers, in –

A: Oh yeah, this –

Q: Is that when you found out about this, or was it after the war that you –

A: No, we read, because it came out in the czecho – in **Czechoslovakia**, in the newspaper, there were – that was happened in – in **Munich**, actually in some newspaper who were – openly said that **Czechoslovakia** was sold. Other newspaper

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who went with more fascistic papers, they said, we saved **Czechoslovakia**, but it wasn't true.

Q: And – and what was your – people in your family, were they concerned about – about **Hitler** at the time?

A: Very much so. And we tried, because my father still was traveling to **Prague**, so he tried in 1938, even he went to **Prague** when it was **Slovakia** and **[indecipherable]** that Germans were there. He still had the opportunity about twice to go to **Prague**, and he tried very hard to get paper for us, because he had his brothers there and they tried to get out us from **Czechoslovakia**, but it was almost impossible then already. So, I think I cannot blame him because he – I know that he tried in – end of 1938, because he saw the situation. He went to the American embassy, but it was hard, because it was co – very complicated to get the papers, first of all to get out from **Czechoslovakia**, and to get the visas from the American embassy, because there is – was a quota. They were sorting people who they let out even before 1938. So he didn't manage it fe – he tried very hard, but it was impossible to – even he had, in 1938 was the World Fair in **New York**. So ra – his brothers sent him papers that he will come to the – to the World Fair, but it was before **Munich**. So, between this time came **Munich** and came the occupation, so it – he couldn't get in for the World Fair.

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Q: Did – you think that the – the – the – the tone of – in **Michalovce** changed, I mean did – was there a [indecipherable] in **Michalovce**, do you remember?

A: Very mu – immediately after – they started to make not pogroms, but anti-Semitic signs before March 1939 when the – it actually was hi – with the help of **Hitler** was established the **Slovak Republic**, and the – **Hitler** occupied [indecipherable]. So – and after 1939, the 15 – starting 15 of March, started immediately against Jews in the newspapers, on the radio, all over. And they were starting immediately again with – they had black uniforms with high boots, and with the low – the caps like officers. And they were driving all over, screaming, and manifestations, egging Jews. So we have to hide, we had to – we were afraid to get out. And then later on, in later years, they made when they came in 1940 – I think 1940, started that you had to – the Jews have to wear the – the yellow star, and then it was curfew, and Jews couldn't get out on the street after six o'clock in the evening, til six o'clock in the morning. So and it was – and later on we couldn't go – go to a movie. For Jews was not allowed to go, for example, to a movie, or any public places. So they started actually, the end of 1939 - 1940, all the persecution of the Jews. And in 1941, when I was in labor camp, and this time all the Jews have to register, and that way they have specially the young people and the single people. So actually that's way, they – my brother had to go to register in 1941, and I didn't

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register because I was in labor camp, so that's – I was lucky, when I come home in March 1942, they didn't have my name, because I wasn't registered, but my brother was registered, so immediately in March or in April, they took him to the labor camp – to the concentration camp.

Q: But you didn't register?

A: No, I didn't, because I wasn't home. I was in labor camp.

Q: And – and when you came back from labor camp, you – you didn't register –

A: Yeah, no, they didn't – because the registration was in 1941.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: So then they had all the names, so they didn't go then after the people. Actually, maybe they didn't know that some people were released in 1942 from – from labor camp. But then, as they went after the families in 1942, later on, so then I went – then we went to hiding with my father, with my mother. And then – and this time in 1943 or '44, because there was – in 19-four – ni-nine – 1942 - '43, they were safe in **Hungary**. The you – Jews were actually much freer, it sa – wasn't the – the Jewish **Kodex**, what this was in **Slovakia**. So my – my father sent my mother and then my younger sister **Lola** to **Hungary**, to **Uszura**(ph), it was a – a city about – about 30 miles from **Michalovce**, because she had there her family.

Q: Your mother was from **Uszura**(ph)?

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A: So, they were assured they were actually safe in **Hungary**. But what's happened later on, in 1944, in May, they started to take with the – **Horthy** came in in **Hungary**. So they started to take the Jews from **Hungary** 19 my – April, May – in May 1944. So that's when my sister and my mother went with her family in **Hungary** to the concentration camp.

Q: To **Auschwitz**.

A: To **Auschwitz**.

Q: Remember **Tiso**?

A: Pardon?

Q: **Tiso**?

A: Oh yeah. I remember. **Tiso** actually, like I wrote in this there, he made the agreement with **Hitler** that he will get rid for the je – from the Jews. Actually, there were – before, the prime minister in this time before was **Tuka**, then he died. Then he and **Tiso** actually made agreement special – **Tiso**, he went to **Berlin** specially to make an agreement with **Hitler** in 1940, I think it was, that **Hitler** will help him to get rid of the Jews in **Slovakia**. And he paid slova – the **Slovak Republic** paid for each Jew who went to concentration camp, they prayed – they paid to **Hitler**, I don't remember exactly how many hundred dollars for each person. And so that's

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what th-the – actually it started, the transportation of Jews from **Slovakia**, and he was very much involved, **Tiso**, and **Mach**, the interior minister.

Q: Sano Mach.

A: Sano Mach. And – I wanted to say – and that's why **Hitler** was sending to **Bratislava Eichmann**, and a German Slovak, the name was **Carmasine(ph)**. They actually were organizing the transporting of the Jews from **Slovakia**. And **Eichmann** were – he stayed very much [**indecipherable**] for a month in **Bratislava**, who was helping **Carmasine(ph)** to make the transportation go.

Q: Did you know about all this while it was happening?

A: We were all – we knew only like we were talking between Jews, he heard this, he heard that, something like that. But we knew that Carmasine(ph) was helping, but for example, from eich – but how far and how much – how much, and Eichmann, I think we actually knew more after the war.

Q: Had you heard of Auschwitz?

A: Very much, later on, that you knew, because actually the whole propaganda was there that they are taking the young people, like for labor in Germany, in Poland – and in Poland. They didn't mention – it wasn't mention about concentration camp. We knew only later on because some news came from Poland that some people th-they don't – aren't alive any more, that immediately they went to – after few weeks

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or months, straight to the ovens. And then I don't remember exactly, then we heard that they – when they came to **Auschwitz**, they are dividing people to the right and to the left, that people who go to work and people who go to the ovens, to the chamb – to the – but it was no – nothing official in the Slovak press, or something like that. They said always that the young people were – went to – to labor.

Q: But the – but the **Kodex** was public, the laws were public.

A: The la-laws were **publicked**.

Q: D-Do you remember where you were when the war started, 1939?

A: In **Slovakia**, I was at home, 19 – in **Poland** in September 1939.

Q: And how did you find out about the war?

A: It was in the paper, this was in the paper that the – the German, because the **Poland** started th-the war, so the – the German made attack, and they are continuing to occupy **Poland**.

Q: But **Slovakia** wasn't involved at that – at that –

A: **Slovakia** was involved later on, in '39, and the – there it has even – had even the name, the – the Slovak army, the Slovak, it was so cold [**indecipherable**] **divizie**, the first divis – division who they sent, certain – I don't – cannot tell you exactly how many thousand people they sent to help to win the war with **Hitler** against the German, against the Russian. Then later on in the Slovak, they – even the people

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did realize, it was like, in the beginning like secret, but then they started to bring back injured or dead soldiers, then the Slovak people started to know that the – actually the Slovak army is in the war against the **Poland** and Russian. But in the press it was always written like heroes, because they are saving the freedom, they are saving the world, because they are fighting against the Bolsheviks, against the communists and so on.

Q: So this was in – I mean, on the Russian front.

A: On the – first on the Polish, but it was the – actually the Polish war was over in few months, so they went there – against **Russia**. But then it started again, actually the main involvement of the Slovak army was in 1941 in June when they started the war, the German against th-the Russian. Because before **Stalin** make the agreement, the so-called agreement with the German that they won't fight to each other. But I don't know how far **Stalin** or **Hitler** knew that it's on-only – not evidently to – actually to gain some time.

Q: Now what – when the – when the war started, did that have an effect on your family? In 1939, was there rationing, were – were people fighting –

A: It started, yeah, it started immediately the rationing. We get some so-called – how do they call? Stamps or something, but it was later on, but it was only maybe three or four items, main items. It wasn't so bad, like for example, in **Bohemia**, in

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Moravia, or in **Germany**. But it started – but it – we – we couldn't see tha – that it wasn't enough, but it wasn't plenty. So we didn't feel the rationing so much in 1940 - '41. Later on maybe on – when the war started in – with **Russia**, then it was harder. Then it was more rationing.

Q: Wh-What – why – let me take back just a one step before. When the – when the **Slovak Republic** was declared in 1939, the – and the laws were passed right – right away – anti-Semitic laws were passed, you said.

A: Yeah, but officially was later on. When it came to Jewish **Kodex**, I don't remember, it was late '39, or beginning of 1940.

Q: What kind of effect did that have on your family? Would – were people frightened, did you –

A: Well, we were very frightened, we were very afraid. Some Christians even stopped to communicate with us. But later on, for example, when they started to take in families in 1940 – late '42 - '43, so we were hiding. We had the neighbor who we had to bribe him so he will be – well, because it was always said – always we had some echo, at night they will start to take the families. Or tomorrow. So we went immediately to our neighbor, and they were hiding in a basement there. He had potatoes, and we were hiding over the potatoes and he was covering these potatoes or so, with a blanket, and it was very – because to go down to the

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basement, it was like the floor, it was wood. So when you open the door, it was – you couldn't see that there is a door to the basement. And we knew for example, many times they came to our house to look for us, and they didn't find us. So many times then, later on when I came home from labor camp in 1942, they still continuing to take young people and single people to the labor – to the concentration camp. So we had the Jewish neighbor, and there was a brother from our neighbor, he was single. His name was **Alfred Salzman**(ph). He lives in **New York**, he's still alive. Then he went – so with him, I used to, especially summertime, because **[indecipherable]** father was planting field, corn, and wheat, and so on. So we run always in the – the night in the field to ha – go in hiding. And we stayed there in two, three days. We had sa – for a piece of bread, or even sometimes water, some **[indecipherable]** not water, because we are afra – we were afraid to come back to our house because they were still taking young people. So –

Q: So would you hide with the family? Your family would go too?

A: No, they – this time, 1942, they started to take the families late '42, or in '43. So that – then I was hiding with my family, but in this time, when they started to take families, my mother and my youngest sister, they were in **Hungary** already. And secondly, in this time, my father had the opportunity, so we had so-called – he

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bought a permission for the government, well you know, it was bribing, so it's true, some people who had a-access to some in the ministry or so, that had the piece of paper that is a letters to stay.

Q: [indecipherable]

A: Sure – yeah, something like that. So we had the opportunity always two months, or three months to delay, actually. Even other families that taken already to the concentration camp. But still, it was a little like – a little like a cover, or we felt a little shi – more secure there the other – other, but we didn't know when it was safe. We got to recognize this permission what you had. So that's where later on my father sent my mother and younger sister to a safe place, to **Hungary**. But then it wa-wasn't worth the danger, we couldn't – it wasn't worth it. We couldn't afford all the – they didn't get the permission already, any permission. So then I was hiding with my father, with my other sister re – some different places. And then we went in ninet – in April 1944, because it was actually a few hundred kilometers, the Russian f – the front was approaching. So all the Jews from eastern **Slovakia** had to move, and to – from eastern **Slovakia** to the west. So they sent us, if you had to – and my f-father had someone in **Bratislava**, in the capital, a family who he used to make some a little business before the war. So we stayed there for a few days, and then we took an apartment in **Bratislava** for a few weeks.

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Q: This was a non-Jewish family?

A: No, this was a Jewish family, still a Jewish family. And we took an apartment in **Bratislava**, but then it was dangerous, especially in – after it was the partisan uprising in August 1944, in **Banskebisatran(ph)**, **Slovakia**, so we have to leave **Bratislava**, and then where we went – I went with my father and my sister to **Nová Vestu nad Váhom(ph)**, from there – then we went actually to concentration camp. And from **Nová Vestu nad Váhom(ph)**, my sister disappeared, and I went, because it started then, the German came, occupied **Slovakia**, so I went there in the woods, and I went to the partisans. So that –

Q: Let me – let me take you back just for a second before we start with the – with the – cause I want to know about the st – the uprising, and your role in this. Just a couple of questions about, from 1939 to 1941, or so, some of the non-Jews that you knew, did – did – did you hear from any of them? Did they offer to help? Did

[indecipherable]

A: Very few.

Q: – express any sympathy?

A: Very few, very few, because most likely was Catholic – Catholic. And some people who were so-called Evangelical Protestants, they were actually always against the **Slovak Republic** because they were not only – not only because they –

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they were persecuting the Jews, but because they were – they were against the catol
– Catholic religion, against the Catholic hierarchy, especially they knew that the
priest actually, of a fascistic **Slovak Republic** is the president.

Q: **Tiso**, yeah.

A: A ca – Catholic priest. So that's where they, if they could, if it wasn't very risky,
they had sympathy, most of them. But very few Catholics. And by the way, for
example like I mentioned, what my father get a permission order to stay, they didn't
take us immediately to concentration camp. It was a very **[indecipherable]** one,
because **Tiso** used to go to a small city in **Slovakia**, western **Slovakia**, it's called
Banovce nad Bebravou. And there he used to go Sunday morning, so-called, to
pray the – the – in that church to make sermons or how you call it. So, in Catholic
church. And there was a widow pharmacist, and I don't know if it's true, and they
said that she was his girlfriend. So – and people had access to this pharmacist, to
this woman, and she took the money and through her people get permission there,
they can stay longer in **Slovakia**. So actually it was a secret, but people are talking
that his girlfriend actually was helping Jews, because she had access to get so – and
how far it went.

Q: How did you find out – who – who asked you to come and report for the labor
camp?

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A: They – they sent a – a – not a – not a – like a note.

Q: The government sent you a note?

A: The government, that I have – this is – it was mandatory to go to the li – to – actually, they called us to the army. And then we came to the army in **Jelene** for example, they made us exercise it like normally soldiers, but for two or three weeks, but immediately they transferred, they organize the labor camps.

Q: So you got a letter in the mail?

A: And send u – and send us to work immediately. We started to work on the roads, to make roads, improvements and – and to dig at the edge of the road, how do you call them, the –

Q: Ditches.

A: Ditches, and then later on, we went – for example, was disasters, flooding or something like that, we went to help. And then when we – they sent us to stone pits, you know, when they ra –

Q: Quarries. Quarries.

A: Pardon?

Q: Quarries. Stone quarries.

A: Right, stone quarries. This was very hard labor for many –

Q: So you went first to **Jelene**?

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A: **Jelene**, yeah. To the – actually to the military barracks. And from there they transfer – they transferred us to labor camps.

Q: Wh-Where else? Where was the next one, do you remember?

A: The next was – we – we stayed in **Jelene** for about for three months, and from there they sent us to the mountain there like I mentioned, to the border of **Slovakia** and **Moravia**, it called **Yarvonik**(ph) and there we were wor – were working on the roads, make new roads there. And there we were – because it was a little – the mountains was, even in August, September was cold, raining, and we had to work.

Q: And – and was there enough food?

A: N-Not in the beginning. When we were in **Jelene** we had food like the military, normal food. But later on we – it was much less. And then [**indecipherable**] from **Jelene**, they send us first to **Vrutky**. They were – they thought they was a military actually, where they had collected military clothing and military shoes, and we were just preparing the military clothing for the Slovak army who went to the front. But it was a na – only few weeks only, and they were send us there to the Moravian border.

Q: And then where?

A: From there –

Q: Were you in **Nováky** as well?

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A: No, **Nováky** I was later, it was in 1942 already. There we went – then we went to **[indecipherable]** far from **Slovakia**. There again we were doing there building from military barracks. From then I did, I stayed about for three months, then they send us, I don't exactly the name or the year, but it was in 1941, I think, they send us to **Svätý Peter**. It was in the mountains where – the **Tatra** mountains, and there we were working on the roads again, and then we were working in the pits, you know, in the – how do you call it, the – the stones we were –

Q: Quarries.

A: Yeah, we were breaking stones and so on. It was – this was the hardest labor what we had maybe all those two years. And from there we went for a few months to **Plaszów**, to a military barrack, and we were helping there clean up, the closing what came – **[indecipherable]** it was in 1941 - '42 – closing and the military equipment, what they brought back from the front, from the Russian front, that they were cleaning. And from there, I went back again t – again to **Svätý Peter**, and for a few days, which was only a few days all the time a few weeks to **Nováky**, then I-I – I went actually back on the later day w-weeks to **[indecipherable]** where from there I went – I went home, but they released us in 1942 in March.

Q: Now this was – was this all Jews?

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A: From when I was in labor camp it was called – so-called in Slovak

[indecipherable] that means, the sixth.

Q: One moment there.

A: Unit, or something like that. Battalion, the sixth battalion, the ra – the right name.

Q: And were there any Gypsies involved as well?

A: No, Gypsies, they were always separate there. Gypsies had separate battalion, and na – like I mentioned, then had the small battalion was –

End of Tape One, Side B

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Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: This is the continuation of a **U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with **Mikulas Judikovic**. This is tape number two, side A. Let – let me ask again a little bit more about the labor camp. Did people die there?

A: Get sick, I don't remember. All right, I didn't – what I know about maybe three or four cases, but the – I don't remember how far it was in connection on from the – yeah, we had some, for example, s – there where I was working the pits, or how you call it?

Q: Quarry.

A: In the quar – there were some – very often some very serious injuries. And on other occasions were injuries or sicknesses. But in two occasions I know that – two or three occasions I remember that people died, but I – I don't remember how far it was connected with work, what we were doing, or – because sometimes it's true in some places where we were – oh, what is that – not far **[indecipherable]** in a village, I think it was **Baltar(ph)** or something like that. And there we had like a – it was a – it was a **guardist(ph)** who were – or in other places I can remember were sometimes even beaten or kicked or something. And many – that was very often that we heard from who were in charge for – of us, against Jews, and anti-Semitic this – all the time. And we forget sometimes some people – I wasn't – I cannot – I

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don't remember that I was, but some – some people were beaten or kicked or something, or pushed. I-I was pushed ma – or something, or – too, but I don't remember that I was beaten, or something like that.

Q: But the guards were **Hlinka** -- **Hlinka** guards?

A: Oh, the members of the **Hlinka** guard, they were fr-fr-from the beginning, they had military uniforms, they had in – like a – like I say the first grade in the military
[indecipherable]

Q: Epaulets that the lieutenants –

A: Yeah, ra – tha – not the **[indecipherable]** lower down lieutenant, but – so they were in charge, but later on actually were in civilian, but they were me-members of the **Hlinka** guard. They never were – there – I don't remember they – if they wore, because they were worn the **Hlinka** – **Hlinka** guard uniform, but they were members of the **Hlinka** guard.

Q: The **Ludacs**(ph).

A: Yeah, the **Ludaci**.

Q: When you were taken to the labor camp, what di – how did – how did you go?
Did you go by train, by truck –

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A: Yeah, by train, yeah. There I received a in – like invitation [**indecipherable**] that I have to be there in **Jelene** on this and this day and so on. So they were waiting for us on the railroad station.

Q: When you left home, what was it like?

A: Very sad. Because we knew – we knew already, it was in 1940, that the **Slovak Republic** that this anti-Semitism, and they are going against the Jews. So actually, not me, not my family knew what will happen to me. And we had very few opportunities then even to write home, to let know. So it was very hard. But in one way actually, the labor camp saved my life, because if I would be home like my brother, I would be registered, and I would g-go to concentration camp. Yeah, and I want to mention one other thing what happened to me. In 1943, yeah, in this time was still safe in **Hungary**, my – my mother and my sister were all there. And my wife – my father actually, made arrangement that I will go to **Hungary** too, because it was safe. And so he found some – a Christian guy who, my f-father paid him, who would take me over the border, because the border wasn't far away. And really, I went with him, he took me over the border, he took me there, we had to go through a small river, so f – deep in the water, about maybe 25 or 30 feet wide. So I had to go – I took off my clothes and go so far in water, and I was in **Hungary** already. So he took me there in a small village to a house, and he told me, you have

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to wait here, and a other guy will come, and we'll take you to **Uszkurat**(ph), where my mother was, it was about maybe 15 miles or so. And so I was waiting, it was about three o'clock in the morning. And suddenly about six o'clock in the morning, instead of the guy who would take me to **Hungary** came the Hungarian police, and they immediately took me and took me back to the border to **Slovakia**. And when they ha – they took me to the Slovakian border, to the Slovakian police, they brought me back to **Michalovce** and put me in jail, because I wa **[indecipherable]** and they put me in jail. There were other people, about 30 of them, young people, Jews, who were preparing like they are cou – almost like a transport to – or to the concentration camp. And there was in **Michalovce**, th-this jail was only – where was the main office, the city hall, there was a basement, and there were keeping only those people. And there was alway like who used to be a guard, like a – like a – what **[inaudible]** there, who used to be there, yeah, a civilian person. And suddenly, the day that they brought me, it was a day before a national holiday. It was in July, I think, where there was a national religious holiday, a Christian holiday. And they put in the basement immediately my – there – some people saw me when they brought me to **Michalovce**, that the police take me – took me to the – there to the jail. So immediately they tak – talk my father. So – and in this time, something happened with my – I had my shoe when was walking so much, and my

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heel, I had some damage [indecipherable] my heel, you know, some blood and so on, and it suddenly get the red. So I-I get some infection. And my father, when he heard that I back in jail, he had somebo – because close to our house was the hospital, and he had – had a doctor who he was very close. So I – he gave me some money, and the next morning, because it was a holiday, he came to the jail and told this guy, listen, I heard here you have a – someone who had some infection. I have to check him. So, he gave immediately, because my father gave some money to the doctor, he gave a little money to this guy, he let him in. He get – take a look at me, and he really saw – I can you show me, even today I have a scar, and he showed – took a [indecipherable] and he showed the guards and said, look, this is red and swollen, I have to take him immediately to the hospital to take – to open it. And you can tell the g – the – the **Hlinka** guard or someone that I took him out and they can see him in the hospital. So he took me to the hospital, immediately he opened it. He made a big – a big bandage on it. I don't even remember if he freeze it or not, but probably, because I felt some pain immediately. And he put me in a room, and immediately aft – in the afternoon, there came two **guardists**(ph), one [indecipherable] police, and what immediately called the doctor, the doctor went with he – with them to the room, and they told him – he told them, look, I cannot leave him, he has temperature – and I really had temperature, because it was really

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an infection [**indecipherable**]. And I cannot even open the wound. I have here the papers of what I wrote down, what I did to him. And you have to wait til take, two or three days til he can get out, or I will see what's happen, because it's so dangerous that he can die even, a so dangerous infection. So it took I don't know how long because they were arguing with him there in the office. So they let me down. And every five or six hours came a guardist, or a policeman to check if I am there. And can you imagine? I swear to you that it's true what I am telling you. The next morning, when it was right after the holiday, early in the morning, all the 29 people too – they took away – that went to concentration camp. And after the war, I met only one of them. He was originally from **Lithuania**, but he lived in **Slovakia** after t – about two years, about three years. And he told me, as far as he knew, immediately in 1942 – for – for – 1943, 22 people, they're shot or died in **Auschwitz**. And he survived, and ya – as sla – as far as he knows, he said, I don't know if someone else survived. So then I stayed in the hospital about 10 days, and then they let me go because the – the older people left already. So – but they had my name, so that's where I went war – in hiding and so on. And I was suspicious because they had my name that I tried to go to **Hungary**. So that's a other story what – I don't know if I told the whole story.

Q: You changed your name.

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A: Yeah, and th-this time, it was end of 1943, again, it was a **Bratislav** priest, not far in the village, who for money gave you a Christian birth certificate, and then for other money, my father bought Christian papers for me, for him, and for my sister. So actually – then when we left from **Michalovce** in 1944, in April, actually I always what I'm – in **Bratislava** sometimes they make identifications. They stopped you on the street even, during the day, show identification. So I showed **Uri Benko**(ph), present identification card with a picture, with – with a birth certificate, with a citizenship, with everything, all the papers that I need to have.

Q: What was the name again?

A: **Uri Benko**(ph).

Q: **Uri Benko**(ph).

A: And I'm fir – you know, and I lived to – under this name, even like a partisan, even in – in hiding. And I was very sorry because when I was liberated, and I – after the second or three days, I met some people who I knew before, even Christian people and some Jewish people started to come from – from labor camp already. It was in April, in May. And I said, what the hell I need this paper, I threw it, I threw it there. Oh, I don't want nothing to have it. And I – I feel very sorry because today it would be a very documentary [**indecipherable**] because it would be really true that – as to what I am saying, that I lived on these papers. And you know what

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happened, I have a other story what – I don't know if I – I told that. When I was liberated, just April the 4th – last week, it was 52 years I was liberated. And I don't know if I told you the story; I was caught twice by the German in 1944 and 1945, I don't know if I mentioned that. If you want I can tell it to you again, the story. In 1944 in October, I was – end of October, or beginning November. I was with a – one group of partisans. They had – because this was woods, and there were – you know, this is a place there in the woods, what you have for example, five, six houses, then you have woods, you have nothing, and then again so few houses. They call it in Slovak **Kopanitsa**(ph), I don't know how to translate in English. So, and they sent me down, because then in the little [**indecipherable**] village, it's called **Kriener**(ph), that was the name of the village. And there were two brothers, Christians. They were **Evangelics**, not Ca-Catholics. The one was – had the bakery, he was collaborating with the partisans, so he baked bread for the partisans, and always send it, or we came down and took from him bread. The other brother had a little grocery store, and by the way, he was buying, it was in the fall, he was buying fruit; apples, plums [**indecipherable**] pears, and they made – and it – that was like a small factory, what they made from the fruit some **mušt**, you know, for drinking, you know, what it – how you calling –

Q: Cider-y –

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A: Cider, something like that. And they really was – even the – most of it went for the army. And in October, I came down around six o'clock – after six o'clock, and on the end of the village, because I had to go to him, to this guy for some information I needed, and I'm supposed to be there about half an hour and then go back. And they – on the end of the village were soldiers, German soldiers already, identification. So I show the identification, and he says, yeah but, this is after six o'clock, I have to te-take you inside – it was a school, there is the **kommandatura**, to make proof that you are – so – and I went there, there was a captain, a German captain. And, identification ev-everything, and I – he said, what I'm doing there? And I said what I am doing, I am here and buying fruit with this and this guy, and they are buying this **[indecipherable]** for the – for **mušt** and for **[indecipherable]** for the Slovakian, the German army. You know what he did? And this guy, this Christian guy knew me, he saw me once, cause I was there one evening with two other guys, we need some information from him. And he let **[indecipherable]** this guy, he didn't know for – what he is calling for. And he came in this – yeah, first of all, he ca – he asked me, the German captain if I understand German. And I said no. And he said how come y-you knew – he knows that I had German study in the school. And I said, yes, we had German, but it was many years ago, but usually we didn't – there were very few conversations, so now I forgot. He gave a German soldier who

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actually was from the **Sudetenland**, so he spoke a little Czech. So he was the translator, so I had always a little – and I spoke fluently German. So he always – the captain ask the soldier to ask me certain question. So I – I had always a few seconds or a minute maybe, time to think about the answer. So, before the questions, he questioned me about for 15 minutes or 20 minutes or so. And he asked me what I am doing, so I said this guy – this guy – I am buying all on those hills fruit, and we make **mušt** and all the say – cider for the army. You know, he glad to call this guy, he came in this room. When he saw me he almost collapsed, because he knew actually who I am, he knew that I am with partisans. So he ask the following question, this guide – this guy. Tell me, is it true that this guy who stays here, he is buying fruit with you for the army? You can imagine, he says yes. Immediately they let him go, and he let go the notary from the city to check my papers if they are not false. And the notary, he is to – still, because this is the – where the partisans were, and I was staying, mostly was 85 or 90 percent not Catholic. They were **Evangelics**, Protestants. The notary came and the – and the commandant, the captain showed him the paper, are these really papers, are not false? And the notary said no, they are correct, they are hundred percent real. And they let him – they let me go, they told me listen, even it's only seven o'clock, but I let you go because I told them where I live, because I cannot let you here during the night. And I said okay. It was

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about seven o'clock in the evening, or 7:15. They [indecipherable] soldier, they [indecipherable] me to the guard there, and let me go. A second time, it was April the 13th, 1945, I came again the same place, and they – it was in five o'clock or 4:30 in the morning. No, I mean, I'm sorry, in the afternoon about five o'clock, I made the – because I thought that six a – after six o'clock I cannot be there. So he says, I still – I have to take you to the **kommandatura**, but in this time there's other arm – other – I don't know, hi-higher than a captain, I don't know what it was. It was the army who actually were moving back because the front was coming, it was very close. You could hear the shooting and everything. So he took me there and he showed – and I thought – I told him that I didn't know that I'm with all – because I lived there and there, outside, and I wanted to visit, I wanted to buy some food still, because there was no food, because there wasn't stores, because there were places what you have no stores, nothing, five six houses, nothing else. So – and in – by the way, both cases, I was lucky that not the one, not the first one didn't tell me to pull the pants down. I wa – I-I don't know, it was a miracle.

Q: There – there were other – you – you'd heard of people being – being asked to do that?

A: I heard – I know – if heard or not, but I knew that the – the Germans all knew that we are circumcised. So he told me, you know what, everything is okay, but you

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know that six o'clock is curfew. You – I cannot let you go, six o'clock I'll let you go. So, and I thought myself, yeah, six o'clock, but I heard the ger – Russian can be here in an hour or in a day. What will happen if I will stay? They will – I have to run away. They will shoot me, because they wouldn't take me or let me go, or something like that. So – and I have to show you that **[indecipherable]** I was near a school, near where the **kommandantura** was, and here was – oh sorry – here was the road, and here was the building of the school. **[inaudible]** And here was a free space, about maybe five feet, about here. And here was the building. And the entrance for the building was here. And all the time at night, a mili – a na – German soldier, he was – he was in charge there during the night, he was walking all the time, from here to here, from here to here. And I heard – yeah, and they put me in a basement, it was – the windows was straight with the ground. And he was – I was walking, and it was about so far – no, it can't be – like from outside to the – not even to other building, could be ma – maybe –

Q: Hundred feet, maybe. 50 yards.

A: 50 yards, or ma – probably 40 yards, 50 or 40 yards from here to here. So I heard – when – and when he came here, you know what, the German **[indecipherable]** stopped, you know, his – his boots, turn around, and again. So when I heard –

Q: This was a sentry?

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A: Pardon?

Q: A s – a sentry.

A: Yeah.

Q: A guard.

A: Yeah, yeah, a guard, yeah. And I heard that he is turning, so I – I opened the window, because it was no –

Q: Bars.

A: – no bars, nothing. I opened the window, and I took my shoes both together, and put over my shoulder, and why – and then I opened – so I heard when he is turning, so barefoot, I went – I jumped here. And here was a fence. It was about so high, with concrete. And then after that was like wires, you know, like –

Q: Barbed wire.

A: Barbed – not barbed wire, not barbed wire, a fence, you know.

Q: Just a fence.

A: A fence. So the whole fence was about so high.

Q: About five feet.

A: Fi-Five – yeah, about five feet high. So I run here, I jump the fence, and run over this – the street here. And after the street, one – a small like a wood, wood with trees. And after the – after the road, about maybe 60 or 70 feet from the road was a

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small – not even a river, but some water was flowing, maybe – not even – maybe six or seven feet [tape break] I fell down in the water, and you know, you fall in the water, get the noise. And he must probably be here, because he heard that something jumped, and it was about maybe 12:30 or one o'clock after midnight. So he immediately started to scream, halt, halt, halt. And so ma – and there when I was on there, on – on the water, so I went like – like this, and through a small – it was like a small here, like about so high. So I jumped over it, and run in the wood, and I immediately heard the bark of the dog, and three or four more soldiers screaming halt, halt, halt. And the – the dog was barking. And I thought they were running this way, and when the dog went to my steps, and he came to the water, he lost –

Q: Lost the trail.

A: Th-That – the –

Q: The scent.

A: The scent, yeah. So this was – I was lucky, because otherwise they would go after me. So they didn't know – because it – it was wood, and usually the German was very afraid to go into woods. That's why the partisans survived, because they stayed in wood. So maybe there were three or four, th-they didn't know what's next to it. So that's – I was lucky, it took me about two hours til I went back to the woods because I know the – the trip. Ti – I went back to my ba – to my battalion, or

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how to call it. And there in – there in – and they were Russians, they were a – we were in this, a battalion about 140 people. And we were – even they be – knew they didn't trust me, they don't even to shot me. The Russians, who knew my name, because they told me that I was suspicion that I am a spy because I was with the German. I supposed to come back in the evening, so I must be a spy and so on. And it took me til they get drunk, and I had to drink with them. And you know, they used to burn, to make their own alcohol there – in there. It was so strong, and it was stinking, not smelling, stinking. So and ha – then in the – in the – and I had to drink with them. So they were half drunk, so I was – took wi – you know, put like – like behind my throat you know, but something still went down on my throat, and you – for days and days I couldn't feel if I eat bread, or if I eat meat, because all my thing was so burned that I didn't feel appetite, nothing. And then in the – early in the morning, suddenly – and more drinking, was drinking, suddenly the guard came immediately, because the Russian are close, so then the Russian – and the German was running back. So the Russian – the Russian army circled us and the ru – and the German m-m-militar – the German soldiers, too. So actually, we were s –liberated, the partisans and the German soldiers –

Q: Were surrounded.

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A: – were surrounded by the Russian. And then was – what's happened, I went down to the village, and the Russian, the carriages were coming. You know, Russian soldiers. And I was standing there and looking and looking, and suddenly they stopped. In the one carriage was two soldiers. And I am looking, looking, and I saw a familiar face. You wouldn't believe that it's true what I am saying. And I say – and the guy starts looking at me, I am looking at him, and I said, in Russian, because I spoke fluently Russian, was with the Russian seven months. I said, are you **Ambil**(ph)? He says, **da**. I says me too, I say yeah. He jumped up from the carriage, the people were – they were civilian people and the Russian soldiers. They were looking, we were hugging, crying, like little – like children.

Q: So who was it?

A: He was a guy from our city. I went together to school with him. His father was a tailor, very poor people. And he escaped in 1939 – 1940, because their family were very communists. He escaped to **Poland**, he gets to **Russia**, he went to the Russian army. He was fighting for three and a half years in the Russian army, and can you imagine that he came ri – this – no, no, no, it was later what I am talking. No, because – oh, I am talk – he escaped in 1940 – four – when we were in labor camp together. And he fa – escaped from labor camp. He went to **Poland**, to **Russia**, to the Russian army. And then – meanwhile, we didn't see each other after that,

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because he went farther with the Russians. In 19 – what was it, what – 1987 or '88, we had a reunion in **Israel** from the Sixth Battalion labor camp, and he was there, and we met after – after almost 50 years we met in **Israel**. And he was very sick, he had cancer. And after two days or three days – he – he lived in **Switzerland**. And he had to leave **Israel** earlier, that was the whole reunion, because he stayed about for a week. And just about four or five years ago, he died. And his name was – he had the other name, whatever, his really Jewish name was **Emil(ph) Furst(ph)**. And here – and here – and he wrote some books. He wrote a book about **[indecipherable]**, about our battalion. I have the book somewhere. **[inaudible]**. So, it's a other story what I didn't tell there.

Q: This was the first time you'd seen anybody from home in –

A: No, after the war – after the war I met some people who are from –

Q: I mean, when you s – when – he was the first you saw when he was on the truck and – and you had just –

A: Yeah, he was the first one who I saw, a familiar face. It was April the 14th, 1945, a day actually when I was liberated.

Q: So – a-and you were liberated in **Krainey(ph)**?

A: **Krainey(ph)**, yeah.

End of Tape Two, Side A

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Beginning Tape Two, Side B

Q: U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with **Mikulas Judikovic**. This is tape number two, side **B**. You were –

A: I think – I think this story is valuable too.

Q: You were liberated from the – from the labor camp – from the labor camp, you were –

A: From the labor camp they let us go, after two years, they let us go –

Q: [indecipherable] 1942

A: 1942 March.

Q: When you came t – when you came back home in 1942, in March, di-did – did you know that – were they starting to deport people then, in 1942?

A: Immediately, immediately in 1942, in April [indecipherable] and my brother was one of the first transport to an – to a concentration camp. That the – the first people were – they started to take, like I mentioned, the young people, and the single people. It started in March, April 1942.

Q: Now wh-when you came home, I – they must have been thrilled to see you, right? You hadn't – you hadn't corresponded very much. What happened when you came home? What was it like coming back to the house?

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A: I no – I knew that I came home to uncertainty. And I was thinking if it wouldn't be better if I would stay in labor camp, because other people – I came with the first people who took to labor camp in 1941. The second time what they stayed – took the young people in labor camp, it was in 1941. So those people stayed til 1943, two re – two years. Some – some disappeared, some got the – then we saw already, we knew that – what's happening actually. Some people escaped from labor camp. Some people still stayed here and there. Some people were in hiding, some pe – different ways, so disappeared, actually, the – the sixth battalion, in 1943.

Q: But your mother was still home when you came home?

A: Yeah, we – she was still home til 1943.

Q: So what was that like once you saw your mother after two years?

A: I was – I was, I think once or twice for two years – for – in the two years what I went home for a few days. Like they let me, for a day or two, get a little – especially when they were close in **Chermedly**(ph), because this was about only 25 miles from **Michalovce**.

Q: Was there a Judenrat? Jewish council?

A: Yeah, in **Michalovce** [**indecipherable**] even I think when the still ta – started the con – to take the concentration camp, was like a Judenrat, and even the name of the president [**indecipherable**] was Mr. **Lang**(ph). And even my father, because my

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father was, before the war, very much involved in Jewish – in Jewish, like organizations. And even he was, I think at the beginning, he was a member of the yood – the Jewish – the Judenrat there, in 1940 – 1940 - '41.

Q: Th-The Jew-Jewish organizations, were they al – they were organizations then in [indecipherable]

A: [indecipherable] Zionist organization was the **Hashomer Hatzair**, was the **Betar**, and was **Mizrachi**.

Q: Was there a **Maccabee** as well?

A: **Maccabee** as well, too.

Q: Did you belong to any of these?

A: I belonged to – to the **Mizrachi** one, wa – one time, and then to the **Hashomer Hatzair**, but I belonged to mostly – it was ret – I don't remember exactly the name, it was like a sport organization. And we had our soccer club, that's what – what – what I – where I belong. But it was still only a Jewish club. And we played some games like [inaudible]

Q: And di-did those continue even during the – during the –

A: During the war?

Q: [indecipherable] '46?

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A: Da – yeah, no, as soon as they started the **Slovak Republic** actually, especially as – a second [indecipherable] out, and second, it was dangerous, because they said all Jewish organizations are Bolsheviks.

Q: D-Do you remember the name **Alex-Alexander Pressberger**(ph)?

A: Yeah, the familiar – fa-familiar fa – some – in charge of some –

Q: In **Bratislava**.

A: Yeah, something. But I never met him or – I heard about him.

Q: What about the organization called **Prukopna**(ph) **Skupina**? **Prukopna Skupina**. The –

A: In **Slovakia**?

Q: In **Slovakia**. The Jewish organization. The working – working group.

A: The [indecipherable]

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, **Pratsovna**(ph). **Práca na Skupina**(ph), yeah, yeah.

Q: Do you – did you know anything about them?

A: Well, I heard that they existed, but I – I never le – was connection, or I never needed from them and asked them. But I heard of **Pratsovna**(ph) because in Slovak you pronounce it **Pratsovna**(ph), not **Práca**, that's a – that's a –

Q: So what about ra – Rabbi **Weisman**, had you heard of him?

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A: Who?

Q: **Dov – Dov ra Weisman – Weisman**, Rabbi **Weisman**, also of **Bratislava**, so
[indecipherable] from the other side of the country

A: Right, right.

Q: You – you said you went into hiding –

A: Actually – actually I went in hiding actually from after – immediately after I
came home from labor camp, til 1944, til we relocated to **Bratislava**.

Q: How did that work? How did you find places that you hid – hiding in attics and
in basements, and –

A: Attics. Even at home I was upstairs, you know, in the attics, and it was – again,
you couldn't see that it – because it's very slow – very low it was, so you hardly can
stay there. And there I was hiding many times. But I mentioned with **Alfred**
Salzman(ph), because he was a neighbor, and we saw, during a small window for
example, at – early in the morning, or at two o'clock in the – a-after midnight, the
guardists that came after me, looking for me. And I was hiding over there and they
were standing and looking around all over, and looking for me. And you can – you
can feel it, how it wer – my feeling, I was **chittering**, you know. And then we
stayed for example, even in wintertime for many days and nights. And secretly they

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brought us early in the night, some food or something like that. And then from the other side it was hay, you know? So we were hiding inside, in the hay.

Q: They came to look for you specifically –

A: Specifically, yeah.

Q: [indecipherable] you weren't registered.

A: They – in this time they knew that – they knew alrea – and a – in this time, after '42 - '43, they knew that people were thrown from labor camp. And you know the Christian neighbors, they rented – you didn't have to register, because the Christian neighbors, they [inaudible], yeah, like our – our neighbor, like I mentioned.

Q: It was just the one neighbor.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. So sometimes you would run from one place to another?

A: Yeah, outside.

Q: So you wouldn't hide in – in the barns, or just randomly?

A: Randomly in his hou – in his basement.

Q: In ju – du – in his basement, okay.

A: Or in the attic there in our house. Because this was a separate building, not to our house, a separate building, and we had that for the – what we need for our kettles or something like that, la – like a magazine.

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Q: Yeah.

A: And it was small, and it was a smaller, like hiding place, actually.

Q: Ha-Had you – at this point had you heard of **Sered**?

A: Yeah.

Q: What did you hear about that name?

A: That is a concentration for Jews in **Sered** and **Nováky**, and actually, in **Sered**, I think, or in **Nováky** was a hospital where they st – kept some – all the Jews, some sick Jews, til they realized it, then they sent them anyhow to concentration camp, or some died there in **Sered** or in **Nováky**. But this was like a camp where they were holding the – the people who later were sent anyhow. So we knew about **Sered** and **Nováky**, that's what I heard.

Q: And what – and the – tell me about when your – when your father decided your mother should go to **U-Uzhhorod**, which is also **Ungvár**.

A: Right, right.

Q: How did that – how did that decision affect you at all?

A: Very hard, because we never knew – we knew what had happened and my father still believed that something will happen, some miracle, and they will – and they will let us be, or they will – they will – somehow he will save us. And then he said, in the – when he thought were really bad [**indecipherable**] then we will go to

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Hungary too. But with – with this time, what – we saw what's happening then in **Hungary**, we couldn't go because it was all the same danger, like in **Slovakia**. And then we heard that they remove anyhow, all the Jews to a safer place in western **Slovakia**.

Q: Di-Did you hear **The-Theresienstadt** as well? Has anybody said –

A: Later on, later – because in this time when we heard from **Auschwitz** and we from concentration camp, we heard il – some far – someone called us that our brother died in – in **Majdanek**. So we heard that are concentration camp, but was in later, in 1944 or something like that. And by the way, this like, is not hear because I – I don't know if you want to put on tape. About four years ago, my wife said – alee – that we are reading the – we are receiving a Czech newspaper, it comes from **New York**, what are news from **Czechoslovakia** and so on. And one day we saw a article there that some Jews who are even outside **Czechoslovakia** and who can prove that they were in concentration camp, or in the army with th-the Russians always there, **England**. They can get some compensation, because the Germans sent some money to the Czech re – **Czechoslovakia**, and it will be like some compensation because they were in concentration camp. So my wife said, look, maybe – and she was – she was very fluent in Czech corresponding as a – because she was a clerk in **Czechoslovakia** – and by the way, we have a Czech typewriter. I

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don't know how it happened, but we bought away from a – during a friend or so on, we had the Czech writer, because the alphabet in Czech is a little different. So she says, you know what? I will try to write application for some people. Maybe they will get. And I do – I thou – I mentioned to my brother-in-law, and he said to a friend of ours. So we wrote application, and really was happen, and we had t-to write the first application to the Ministry of Defense. They will prove – they could prove if you have – that you were like persecuted in a labor camp. And then they give a paper, so-called law number 255. This is a law, a Czechoslovak law what recognized that you were persecuted, and you were eligible in certain advantages. For example, like I have the 255, I – and I get because I worked in **Czechoslovakia** more than 25 years, I have pension, because I am eligible on normal pension. And I'm better, if I get the normal pension, that I will get compensation through the Germans. So we wrote them, and I received the 255, and then we made the application for the Czechoslovak Social Security, because they give the money. And th-that proved tha-that he was persecuted and were receiving the money. And in the pens – you have to have a affidavit from a doctor that he has certain illnesses, and he has – he has invalidity, 10 percent, 50 percent, 100 – and he gets certain amount of money. And we have about five people already. And some get 35 dollars a month, some get 60 dollars a month. And in one occasion he get 110 dollars a

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month, and were received through backwards for half a year, or year, or th-th – thousand dollars, or 1200 dollars, besides what – and they receiving every month, even today. So – and I needed addresses for certain concentration camp, because you have to prove that th-they were in concentration camp. So I went here, to the Holocaust Museum, and get out maybe 30 or 26 addresses, even from small concentration camps. And what the people told us, there were this concentration camp, this **cencontra** – well, from the [**indecipherable**] from the concentration camp, they were sent to work in a factory. The factory actually received people to work from the sod – concentration camp. It was for a hundred people, 150 people. So I went there into the da – and suddenly, when these people received the money, he said – the one friend told to the other friend you wouldn't believe, we are almost 50 people, what we made applications from – beside that, two years ago came new laws in **Czechoslovakia**, so it's more complicated. You need more proof, more papers. So I went to the library in the Holocaust Museum, I took all the addresses, because we had to write to all those concentration camp. We write in Polish, we write in English, we write in German. And to the international cross in **Arles**, and in all over. And all the peoples are coming, so there are proof there were some da – and I'll have to translate from English to Czech, from German to Czech, from Polish to Czech, from Russian to Czech and I am doing all these things, and I have

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– I'm translating. I am going to notarize my signature that I translated. So you cannot imagine what a work, what we would – if you – if you would know that it takes so long, we wouldn't do it. And you know what, we don't take money from those people, and we are doing this free. Some people when they receive the paper gave us, I don't know, they gave us 20 dollars or so, or nothing, we don't ask the money, because they see how much work it has. So what I wanted to say, I went to the con – to the labor – to the Holocaust Museum. Suddenly I saw a thick two books. And I saw people – can you stop for a moment? I bring you to show you something. **[break]** It runs?

Q: Yeah.

A: So, actually, I can be very grateful and thankful for all those people, to my wife, because it was her idea, and s-she makes the lot, a lot of work. She spends hours, hours of her free time with all those papers and everything. And so I went to the Holocaust Museum, and in there find two books, and that's what the book says. You can read it.

Q: **[indecipherable]** from **Auschwitz**

A: Yes, in English.

Q: – fragmented death books from **Auschwitz**, remnants, edited by **Vidacza**(ph) from the state museum at **Auschwitz** at **Birkenau**.

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A: And here you know what? There I find the name of my brother.

Q: Oh my gosh. **Judikovic, Des – Deseter**(ph)

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. That's – this is the date when he was born, and there he died.

Q: Born on April 4th, 1924, **Michalovce** –

A: Yeah.

Q: – and died on July 6th, 1942.

A: And I went to ma – a rabbi, and he wrote me down when I have

[indecipherable] right after –

Q: The 21st **[indecipherable]** 5702.

A: So there you see the feeling what I had, and I said to myself, all those work what we are doing, it was worth it that I went there because this is something – you cannot imagine what it means to us. What – what – what – what the – suddenly, it happens that we had to make this, otherwise I wouldn't go to look for addresses or something. I was in the Holocaust Museum many times, but the – I would go to look for something, and this a – I went there, and this what I found.

Q: What does it do for you, to know?

A: Very much so. Because at least – and for my sister too, because they knew at least – because we had different stories, he died there, he went there. And now we

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know exactly what happened to him. At least we know that he didn't suffer two or three years there. And I know, for example, my father, you know ma – I-I didn't say when, my father – it happened when my father they took to concentration camp from **Nova Nestu**(ph) like I told you, it was in October, and I met some guy from our city, who went with the same transport from **Sered** to **Auschwitz** with him, but he was a tall guy, he was much younger, he survived. Co – and I met him, and he saw my father when **Mengele** sent him to the left, immediately, in **Auschwitz**. He saw – he – he said it was few, maybe 20 or 25 people in front of me. But he survived because he was a strong guy, he was four – in the 40s or so, so he went – they put him the – to go to work. He – then he came to **United States** this guy, and I met him, he wa – when I came to **United States** here, but he died already.

Q: What happened to your other sister? One sister –

A: Yeah, **Lola – Lola**, she wa – went from **Hungary** together she went with my mother to concentration camp. She went to **Auschwitz**, she was in **Dresden**, she was in – what do you call that – not in **Poland**. I was in – visiting there, because I was in **Auschwitz** twice, and I was – **Stutthof**, she went to **Stutthof**. I was there, and I look the concentration camp, but it's nothing left, only – only the – the oven is there and some grounds where the barracks were standing.

Q: And you had another sister, who your father managed to get –

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A: Oh, she se – she – she [indecipherable]

Q: Tell – tell me about that, th-the –

A: She has – she get married in –

Q: But she became a nanny, you said.

A: No, no, th-this was – this was the other sister, the – what she doesn't want to talk about, because she was a nanny, and then she disappeared from there. Either they caught her and I don't – she – I tell you the truth, I really not mean on my other sister, nobody knows exactly what happened to her, because she says, please, don't talk to me about. So –

Q: Okay, but you – but you saw her once during the war?

A: Yeah, but it was in – immediately when my father – that where was – she was a nanny, but then I didn't see her any more.

Q: You said in – when you talked to them, people in the museum, you said that you saw her in the street, she had a stroke –

A: Yeah, but that – that – that was in October. From this time then, I didn't see her.

Q: But – and you said that this was an example of a feeling of a moment.

A: Yeah.

Q: What – what kind of feeling was that?

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A: That the – the feeling was in this moment that maybe we'll see each other the last time. So, what can I say, a feeling is. I said, I – I remember I thought to myself, I would like to know if we would know at least if someone for us – from our – both of us will survive. What can I – because I saw – in this time I saw th-the – the other situation there.

Q: Did you have that feeling at other times?

A: During the war, many times. Like a – I – I never thought that I will see someone from my family again, or if they – someone will survive, if they will see me. Because actually, especially when I was [**indecipherable**], people were dying next to me. I was only the lucky one that I survived. Or, for 17 days in wintertime, in January, we didn't have food, we didn't have what to eat. So – and we were hiding, we were – we lived on the – in the woods, and it was the pa – the trees, you know, under the trees, was free place around, was snow. So we were sleeping under the trees where the snow was blown out. And we had a ration of so-called bread, but actually it was crumb from dark, black bread, because it was old bread, it was in – smelled with – the whole thing. So we received a cup of the old bread, because you couldn't slice it, it was crumbs only, it was so old. So that cup of this crumbs, so-called went for two or three days. That's – that's all, and water – instead of water we ate snow, for 17 days because we are – we were **circummed** –

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Q: Surrounded.

A: **Circumround.**

Q: Surrounded, yeah.

A: We could – we couldn't move out because the Germans, so this is the other part of that. So I never was thinking that I will survive if I will – if I will survive for the next hour, you know.

Q: Do you remember the last time you saw your mother?

A: When she left from **Hungary** to us in 1943.

Q: What – what did you say to her? Did you say anything to each other?

A: Yeah, in this time we were saw that we will come after you, we will see each other and [**indecipherable**] back, will come back. You know, it was hard, we were crying and so it, you know, we leave then – with some member of the family are leaving – leaving you, it was uncertainty. You don't know what's happened to you, what's happened to her. It was hard, it was hard every day to be with her. She don a – and you have a household, and you don't have a mother. So, it wa – it was hard for my father too, it's a –

Q: It must have been very difficult for your father when your mother left. So who – who was left at home, just you and your father?

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A: Me, my father and the sister, you know, who – already who doesn't want to talk about. And actually, she was in this time about 15 years old, and she was holding, or keeping the whole – whole household, cooking and washing and everything.

Q: So he tried to take care of each of you, he got – he took care of your mother and your sister –

A: Yeah, right.

Q: – and he was trying to take care of **Heddy** as well. He got her a place someplace. After they left, tell me th – tell me then what happened next, in 1943. You – you went into hiding then with your father –

A: Ah, because I was a – yeah, my – our – our father too. But still, my – we had til the – in this time certain ti – certain times, like permission to stay, but actually it was only for my father. It says that for the family, but you can never guarantee because they were – first of all, all the time, even later years, in '42 - '43, after young people, because they know – they needed for work. If someone was working there around vaca – concentration camp for one year, it don't – they didn't care if survive or not survives. So – especially when someone came concentration camp, for example, women with children. Women were better when they came in concentration camp by theirselves. But you know how it was, every mother goes with their children because they immediate – in **Auschwitz** they divided the men

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separate, and women with children a – separate women by itself. So they saw a woman with children, they immediately sent to the oven. So, it was – and then women realized, even it was heartbreaking, so they let the children, separate the children, and they survived, because they didn't go with the children, otherwise they would go to the chimney – to the oven, too. So the children – anyhow, very few survived. And my sister **[indecipherable]** was here. She went from **Hungary** to concentration camp and she was lucky, because she went with some cousins. And she was, in this time she was 14 and a half years old. And so the women were – they were – the **SS** came many times to look for children, so they were hiding her in concentration camp. And they were – they were so **malnutritious** they don't – didn't have any food, so other women brought pieces of bread only to get here to give her, or I don't know, if they found something, a little milk or something. And she wa – but she was her – she was lucky that she was always – her – her – her body, her looks, more older than she was, actually. Even today, she is tall – taller. So that – and she went to work, she was working with the other women in **[indecipherable]** manufacture, hard working. And many times other women, especial the cousins, took the hard work instead of her because they worked, for example in **[indecipherable]** to do certain amount of work, and she couldn't. So the other people were – even when they know that they're going – looking for children

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or for something. Or even so to look around, they didn't see her. So they were hiding her in concentration, many time. And like I'm saying, they bought certain food for her, that she survived.

Q: Wha – wa – while you were in hiding, you – you – you didn't go to any more labor camps, you weren't caught.

A: No, no, and I never came out – that was only from four – 1940 to 1942. If I would go in a labor camp, or if someone, for example to **Nováky** or to some people they took there, and they were working, they were standing there, they were staying in no – **Nováky**, they were working there for weeks and months. Then – but they – they sent them anyhow to concentration camp.

Q: But you were separated from your father, and he went to **Sered**.

A: Yeah, th – but no, th – I was separated mainly after they caught him in October then in 1944, then we were separated. Even before I was few days in beginning of – in the end of September and the beginning October, I was actually the partisans already.

Q: Tell me how you ma – hooked up with the partisans. How did you –

A: I went to – normally I wa – I made the – I-I didn't want – I want to be a free country, I want to be help, to fight the Germans. And this time the – when I came to the first partisan, most of the people were Slovaks. It was about 75 or 80 people,

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and there were about maybe 10 or re – 12 Russians. And they were Russians who either escaped from labor camp, or escaped from the [indecipherable] some out from the army or so. So – and then later on, actually these Russians, because mostly about six or seven of them were officers. So then, they made a special battalion and other Russians started to come, because actually – and when the uprising came in August 1944 to **Banská Bystrica**, the Russian sent some Russian people to help for alph – uprising. So actually many Russian people then stayed there, even the Russian army told them to stay there and help through the uprising. So hundred and hundred of Russian people stayed there in **Slovakia**. So that's where I get there in – sometime November or so, with the Russian. But you know, with the partisans in this time were so – we were, for example, one battalion. And suddenly we were in fighting with the German and they were – we were overpowered. So suddenly, like we disappeared, 10 people here, three people there, 40 people there. So it took time, even weeks sometimes to get put together again. Sometime it happened that, for example [indecipherable] occasion sometimes in December, I was with about 16 or 18 people. We were wandering about for three weeks, til we find the other bigger – larger group.

Q: How did you find them to begin with? They were in – they were in the forest, in yeah –

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A: In the forest, in the woods, they're all over there. And then they used to come to the small, you know, like [indecipherable] to the houses, what was separate, six, eight houses. And those people were always helping the partisans, because those were mostly all Protestants, not Catholics.

Q: And these were Slovakian partisans at first?

A: Yeah.

Q: So you joined the partisans. Do you get a gun?

A: Oh yeah, automatic pistol.

Q: So you – you didn't – you – were you – what – what was it like the first time you went into some sort of combat with the Germans?

A: Frightening. I remember the first time I had the shooting, I'm telling you, you couldn't cut my – couldn't cut [indecipherable] in my – my body. It was frightening, but you know, in this time, actually, when you live this kind of life, you don't later on, believe me, you don't think about living and dying. You forgot. You are – you're – you're –

End of Tape Two, Side B

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Beginning Tape Three

Q: – continuation of a **U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with **Mikulas Judikovic**. This is tape number three, side A. Did you think about that when you were –

A: You mean whe – you mean – oh, here and there I thought it would be nice to survive, but I said I – many times I thought to myself, what if – how it will if I survive, and nobody from my family? Because in this time I knew very well what's going on in concentration camps. So thi – by the time – and it was – I even met in January, or in February, two Russian guys who escaped from a concentration camp in **Poland**. Because mary – many Russian soldiers were in concent – labor camps and in concent – even concentration camps. They were separate like other – like, for example, from Jews. And they came, I talked to them about – maybe for 10 minutes or so. It was – it was winter in 1945, I remember exactly. Then – because the Russian – the Russian **kommandatura**, what we had there, they sent them back, they disappeared, I don't know what happened to them.

Q: Among the partisans – was there any anti-Semitism among the partisans?

A: Oh yeah, very much so. Especially from the Russians. And I had, for example, when I was – the last few weeks what I was with the partisans, especially I think I mentioned there in the thing, I was a captain, a Russian, his name was

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Mosalchuk(ph) or something like that. He was – he must be a white Russian like we used to say [**indecipherable**] anti-Semitic, and later on, I f – I feel sorry, I mean, it was a captain, and I thought always that he must be Jewish, because he was all the time so nice to me. And he – maybe he was suspicious. He knows me – he knew me [**indecipherable**] call, you know, I – short name for **Uri**. And I was afraid this time you know, because I didn't trust much the Russians, because I saw what they are doing, even on their own people, even with their partisans. If something was – say they did something wrong, he didn't hesitate, he shot him. He didn't hesitate. He [**indecipherable**] probably drunk or something, or he didn't do right what he's supposed to do. He didn't take a shot – take – shot him, and that's all. And so I thought that he was Jewish, and he maybe thought – and I said to myself, no, after the war, I return. But I lost sight of him about a week before we were liberated, and I never saw him again. Never saw him again. He got lost somewhere, it was about a week or 10 days, some time end of March. [**inaudible**]

Q: How did the – how did the anti-Semitism manifest itself? I mean, what did th – what did they do, just –

A: Oh, well, ma-many times he said to – oh those Jews, you know, **yahvrai**(ph), **yahvrai**(ph), **yahvrai**(ph). Even he didn't mind nothing, yeah, he was drunk, or na – he was hard drunk, he was – all – all the Jews, for example, he said, sitting at

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home, and we have to fight. So bet-between discussions or something like that. Oh, here and there, heard the ra – the name, **yahvrai(ph)**, **yahvrai(ph)**.

Q: And it was different from day to day, I mean, did the – did you get –

A: No, it was **[indecipherable]**. No, it was occasional. It wasn't like day to day, not at all. But still, you could feel some that – you know how it is, you are betwee – the su – you don't have to listen to words, you can – you have to feel it.

Q: And – and as a – as a fighter, was it – did you have specific assignments? Did you attack trains, did you attack soldiers? Did you –

A: I was involved in one train attack, but if you put only mines, we go – went down, we put only mines, and then it was like for timing, you know. So we were far away to the timing, because we knew the train will come, about in four or five hours. But they – and they can displace wa – no personal trains, only – what – how did that –

Q: Military.

A: Pardon?

Q: Military trains.

A: Not only military. For example, trains that were for – for sending supplies

Q: Material.

A: Mater – material, so – so we had to go back, we had to go far away, but we knew that it was the – the rail was damaged. It was **[inaudible]**. And most of the time

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what we were fighting, we were actually all the time moving. To tell you the truth, most of the time we tried not to be involved in the fight with them, because most of the time they were – we were – we overpowered, because they – we were, for example, 60 people or a hundred people, they were a few hundred. And they had heavy armament we didn't have. We had some machine guns, th-the light machine guns. Maybe one time we had, one or two, the heavy machine guns. But we lost, for example, in a fight. We have dead bodies that are – so, it was hard. Sometimes we regret that we have even only rifles.

Q: Were there other Jews in the partisans?

A: No. I had the one time it was sometime – this is another story. Some times in November, it was a Jewish guy whom I knew from home. He was in a city not far from **Michalovce, Medzilaborce**, and his father was a pharmacist. And he was with me like a partisan, and we were in a fight sometimes in end November or December. And he was like so far like from here to the **TV**. And he got a bullet here straight in the chest. And I don't know how you call this bullet. This was a bullet what took apart your body. And he was in – died next to me, I saw he wa – and usually, when someone died, even it was a German or a Russian or a – or a Slovak or so, usually, especially it was close to a village or so, and they knew already they went, because the people used to go to the forest there and so they saw some dead

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people, so they buried them. They buried them there, or they took them to the cemetery. Anyhow, so I don't know here – where he was buried. Can you imagine? Life you know, the – the li – the human life is so unpredictable. And in 1946, I met his sister, she survived the Holocaust. She was a year younger than he was. And it was hard for me, and I met her in – in **Prague**. And she somehow – I don't know if she knew us, we were talking and talking, and then we were talking about the brother. And he was – she was really suspicious that I knew about him, or she **[indecipherable]** us. And then I told him, you know, **Vera**, I was with your brother during the war. And she hold my hand and she says, **Mitu(ph)**, tell me what happened to him. I couldn't talk for a moment. And I told her, you know, I am sad to tell you, that in November 1944 he was hurt and he died like a partisan. She hugged me. And that was in a restaurant. We were crying. Can you tell me where he is buried? And I told her, **Vera**, I am sorry to tell you that I cannot tell you, because I know it was in the forest, it was like out of the forest, it was like a free space, but usually the people were – are buried, those people, I cannot tell you, but I know it was about 10 kilometers from **Kleiner(ph)**, 12 kilometers. But I ge – well, it was very hard. And the next year, in 1947, I think she moved there to **Australia**. And I don't know what happened to – then with her, she – I don't – she got married there. So tha-that's was the other story, sad story.

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Q: What was her name?

A: [indecipherable] you know. Maybe some people, if someone would – I would meet, or someone would – someone come along from **Medzilaborce**, they will remember the name for sure. Because there in **Medzilaborce**, this is a – a smaller city than **Michalovce**, but was some Jews, maybe sa – some hundred Jews for sure. Very religious city, it was, a very Orthodox. It was opposite like in **Michalovce** I think there were more Orthodox like [indecipherable] everything for **Ashkenazi** or something. You know, this is how to – you know, can't remember everything, ever what's happened. For example, just few days ago, I don't know, we were talking about with my sister, and she mo – she mentioned someone who survived, and we were together in 1947 or '48. And I said, you know what? I long time never even remember that he survived. And we were talking also someone, so, you know, I'm still wondering, you know, I still think it's a plus, and I feel til tod – til today, 52 years af-after the war, 55 years or somewhat, and I still remember so – little things I saw. Things what – it's better maybe fo – I will forget, but I – it cannot be forgotten because this what you are doing, this is for generation, generation, we are – can be only grateful that it will stay somewhere. And some people, in 50 years, a hundred years will take a look and listen to this what happened. Because otherwise, even today, people don't believe that something like that happened.

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Q: This may be a good place to stop for now. I'd like to talk to you again, about after the war. But maybe we could stop for now, and then I'll – I'll come back and we'll talk some more.

A: This is a other story. If a – if I – you know, I – I mentioned to you how I became to – to this country. What – to – to – to what we go – went down. You know, that the other border from **Slovakia** to **Hungary** only, you wouldn't believe it.

Q: Okay. We – we'll – we'll set up a time and come back soon.

A: Okay, give me a call any time. And see two and a half – because it's still a long time and with no question, all this – this what we went through, not only myself, all those people, it left on your brain even mentally. In normal circumstances, I would remember more about the war, or knew about, but it was so many things that happened, that you don't know what's important, what's not important, if you remember. Now it came to my mind maybe in a year or so, or so –

Q: D-Do you think about some of these things regularly?

A: Oh many times. And you know, after the – after the war, it was a nightmare. It wasn't one night that I didn't dream that I'm again in [**indecipherable**] in the labor camp, that I am caught by the German. That all – now I saw my father, he came fr – home from labor camp, I saw. It was night of the night. Even when we came – when we escape from **Czechoslovakia**, you cannot imagine how many times I had the

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dreams, oh they caught me on the border, oh I am again in jail, or something. And you wake up, you are wet, sweating.

Q: Still?

A: Not – not now, but – now very seldom, but still it did very – happen. Just about a week or two weeks ago, you know, when I told to my wife, you know that we were together again in the **Auschwitz** museum, because I was there with my wife. And I was so scared that you ho – you were holding me, I says, not to go farther, not to go farther. And I said, I have to, I have to. And suddenly I woke up. So – something. I was just thinking a moment ago what I wanted to tell you, oh my gosh. Yeah, for example **[indecipherable]** yeah, for example, the first time, I forgot to mention, when they caught me, it was outside the village, around – about maybe a kilometer or so. And suddenly – they caught me when – because German army, about 30 German are exercising outside the city. So when they saw – saw me that the guard caught me to make identification, the – about 10 or 15 German soldiers are standing a-around me, and they took me to the **kommandatura**. And people, the people who lived there, Christians, were standing, because it was some buildings already **[indecipherable]** they were standing outside. It was beginning of the – and they saw I wa – I was in this time in plain, civil clothing. And they saw the German soldiers are hi – holding a civilian guy and going with him to the **kommandatura**.

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So the Christian people, some women, were standing outside, started to – the crossing, you know, praying for me. They were – they knew that they see it, and they knew that partisans are around, and they knew a civil human being, between them – German soldiers that they knew that I'm certainly a partisan, and that is the end of me. So people were standing and th – the outside, and praying for me, like this.

Q: Did you think you were gonna survive at that point?

A: No, no way. No way. I – I-I was – I was only thinking – I was only thinking, believe me, I remember like today, I was thinking, it's question, if they will shoot me here, or they will send me to **Auschwitz**. That's it, the two questions what I got. This I remember like today.

Q: Are there – are there certain things that touch off the memories more tha – more than other things?

A: Well, maybe – for example, I was in hiding – actually, I was in hiding two years, give or take, from 1942 til 1944, til we went to **Bratislava**. All the time you were thinking, what will be next? How long? And this, you know, we-went for a wedding last year to **Los Angeles**, his – his niece [**indecipherable**] married in **Los Angeles**, you know, wa – **Arthur Salzman**(ph). And so we met again, we met a few times in **New York**. But then we didn't see each other maybe seven or eight years. And we

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met again. The first thing we see each other, we're hugging, because that's – and the first thing oh, and you thi – immediately for relatives who – for American people, so – but this guy, this what we survived. This is my body. And I said, not true, because you are my body, cause we were hiding for more than a year together. He is older than I am, he is in the a – 82, I think.

Q: You went to **Banya(ph) Bystrica**.

A: Yeah.

Q: – for the Slovak **[indecipherable]** for the uprising.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: What – what – what did you think about when that happened? Or did you – you went with the partisans?

A: I thought more – I think – I-I thought, oh, this is the end, this will be – pretty soon be the end of the war, because I saw all those people, hundred – thousands of people, **everage** – everybody excited. They was standing on a – on a truck, and give everybody a rifle. Everybody a rifle.

Q: So what was it like in **Banya(ph) Bystrica**?

A: It was **[indecipherable]** immediately came the Czechoslovak flags, and came Czechoslovak signs. Our freedom is here, and – against the German, you know, signs, against the Slovak army. But after about six weeks, and went immediately to

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the forest, and fighting against the German. But then, end of October, the German put thousand of tho – thousand military with heavy weapons, with tanks and everything. That's when they liquidated the uprising. That's where everybody who – some people, especial Christian, went home. Some went to the forest, some went in – that's what it started to make separate partisan battalions.

Q: So that's when you joined the partisans.

A: Yeah, they – that's – and then after **Banská [indecipherable]** sometimes in October, November I went again with my father and my sister to **Nova Mest(ph)**. There I stayed for a few days and then I went in October, end of October again to the partisans, because I heard they are not far away in the forest, so I went there.

Q: Wi – I – I'm sorry, was your father with you in – in **Banya(ph) Bystrica**?

A: No, no, no, no. He was in **Bratislava**.

Q: He was in brat –

A: And from **Bratislava**, he came to **Nova Mesto(ph)**, that where he stayed.

Q: Until he was taken away.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. All right. Why don't we stop for today?

A: Okay.

End of Tape Three

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Beginning Tape Four, Side A

Q: This is a continuation of a **U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with **Mikulas Judikovic**, on April 14th, 1997, at his home in **Southfield, Michigan**.

The interviewer is **Sidney Bolkosky**. This is tape four, side A. Can we go back just for a moment to – to – to have you tell me a little bit more about the Slovakian national uprising in **Banská Bystrica**. You were – you were part of that?

A: Later on. It was the end of sometimes – a month later, like it started – started about the – exactly the 29th of August, 1944. And in this time I was in **Bratislava** with my father. And then he left – w-we had to leave because they had said that the German will occupied – will occupied **Slovakia**. So, after a few weeks, sometimes end of – middle of **[indecipherable]** the 15th or 20 of Sep-September, we left **Bratislava** and went to **Nova Mesto**(ph), where we stayed, I stayed for a few days with my father. And then I went for about two or three days to **Banská Bystrica**, and from there they send it, or they told us to go to the forest. Then I started, about the end of September, I think it was – yeah, the last week September, with a group. But this was only – only few Russian, some Slovak, some – even I think about two or three Czechs.

Q: Partisans.

A: Partisans. And then I wa – actually when I started. And then later on, it was end of October. In October the – the German came in and started to occupy **Slovakia**,

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and they took over all the ruins and everything in **Slovakia**, special in western **Slovakia**, where the – was the most of the upr-uprising, and –

Q: And was there – was there fighting in **Banská Bystrica**?

A: In **Banská Bystrica** most of the time, specially the fir – i-in September and in even beginning of October, mostly they were organizing, there was the – the main ga – **kommandatura** the – the – from the partisans, the – how they call them? The – all the – I mean, all the high officers and everythi – who – who were organizing the uprising, because the – from **Banská Bystrica**, they were organizing the uprising, who it was part in eastern **Europe**, not far **Michalovce** where I lived, it was in the mountains abou-about 15 or 20 kilometers from north of **Michalovce**, it was a small group. The most of them they were in the higher **Tatra** in the mou – mountains, and the lower **Tatras** in the mountains. So the whole organization was a – the – from **Banská Bystrica**, they made the whole – like – they organized from **Banská Bystrica**, from all the time. And beside that, in **Banská Bystrica** was the first actually Czechoslovak – so-called Czechoslovak government in exile, and many high ranking officials came from **London**, and then the Russian started to drop munition and weapons from the air, first from the air and then even many times they landed in **Banská Bystrica**, there touch outside from **Banská Bystrica**, or they brought a we-weapon the Russian, or [indecipherable] for the uprising.

Q: But this was – was this before the Germans were there, or –

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A: Yeah, before the German, before the –

Q: So this is the Slovakian army –

A: Yeah, bu-but it was because as soon as was the uprising August the 29th, actually the whole, especially in the middle **Slovakia**, and western **Slovakia**, the so-called – the freedom fighters, and the democratic like organization of they called, like the first Czechoslovak, like a government, took over all the – the – actually they – they were – they were – they took over the power there in **Slovakia** – most of the **Slovakia**'s [**indecipherable**] most of the part of **Slovakia**. But then in October it started the German came in, and it started to occupy **Slovakia** and they took it over, so all – actually all the uprising and all the partisans and even the – all the – the – the high officers and the government of-officers pull out from **Banská Bystrica**, and everything went to the forests, to the mountains. That was sometimes in October, I don't remember exactly because it was – it took many, many days.

Q: You told me last time that you – you and a friend were together, his name was **Hirschkovitz**(ph) –

A: Yeah.

Q: – and that – that he got shot next to you. Do – do you remember what the circumstances were about that?

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A: Oh yeah, actually I was with him about for four or five weeks, only it was end of December and in January, in January, because what we were in a fight, it was end of January, and that's – I remember the place what I ha – I – if I would go there, but I don't reme – you know, remember the name at wa – I was in the forest, in the so-called **kopanice**(ph), I – I don't know how to call this in English, it was a places when it was forest, then it was five, six houses. There was again forest, then again some houses. And then not far away a little, in the mountains there, it was about – I can say about so – almost eight or 10 miles from the main road **[indecipherable]** right there in the mountains, in the forest. There where he died, it was a – like a – a clear space out of the woods, and there where he died. And not far away, about maybe four or 500 yards were some – about four or five houses. So probably those people took care of him and buried him somewhere, but I am – I don't – I don't know where.

Q: But you were fighting against the Germans at this point?

A: Yeah, yeah, it was against the German, yeah. Because sometimes – actually from end of September when I started with the uprising, til the fourth of, or third of – the fourth of April, 1945, most of the time I was with different groups or – of partisans, because many times we were fighting, and we were, for example 80 or a hundred people, and suddenly they – the German overpowered us, so we dis – disappeared from each other, we dispersed. So, then we had to look for each other

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and sometimes I didn't even find some people because they went to other group, and I didn't even know what's happened, if they survived, or not survived. So that, for example was about maybe four or five times that I had to look for a group, and I was, all together about with three or four different groups, because where I found a group, so I took part with them. I didn't look for the group what I was before, because I didn't know even they exist, because it were – we were a group, for example, 70 - 80 people. So five or six people went there, 10 went there and some died, so it was dispersed, so we caught where we could.

Q: W-Were you there still under false papers? Did –

A: Yeah, I wer – the whole time I was living for tha – they didn't know my original name.

Q: So they didn't know that you were Jewish?

A: No, no, no.

Q: So partisans [indecipherable]. Did **Hirschkovitz**(ph) –

A: **Hirschkovitz**(ph) knew.

Q: Right.

A: This is the only guy who knew that I was Jewish, he knew fr – where I'm from and everything.

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Q: Di-Di – it s – it seemed – you mentioned him, so I thought it – it had made a – some serious impression. Was he close – near to you when – when he was shot, is that what happened?

A: Oh, it a – it was about maybe 15 or 20 feet from me.

Q: And ne – and what happened when he was shot?

A: So he – he stayed there. We had after – because we were in a fight, so we had to move. So I left. When I left he still was there, so if they buried him the same day or next day, I don't know [**indecipherable**] to because I never came back on this place.

Q: But you s – you saw him, you s – you knew he was dead?

A: Yeah, I saw him, I saw him, he get the – like a – a bullet what it tur – tore apart his chest. I don't know what to call – how to call this kind of a bullet. It was against the **Geneva** Convention to use these kind of bullets, and they used it, the German used it.

Q: You went back with the partisans, then – then you left them and went with your father, is that what happened next?

A: I left my father there because I went with the partisan til sometimes end of September, so here – he – he stayed there in **Nova Mesto**(ph) in this apartment, and we decided that I will see what the – the situation, and I will check how the connection, that someone will come and pick him up, and I – I wa – I even had

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family who was willing for a small [indecipherable] not in the part – in the forest to – for to keep him, to hide him, because my father had some money with him too. So – and we tried, and then we were fine, because we had the other family, his name was **Farkos(ph)**, who was a neighbor of ours in **Michalovce**. And I knew that he is there hiding already in the forest, so our plan was that on – my father will come there, we'll stay for a few days there with this family, with a Christian family. And then he will probably go there with the **Farkos(ph)** couple, this is the – he and his wife. Then – and they s – the **Farkos(ph)** couple even survived, and they went after the war to **Israel**, and they died then in **Israel**. And his sons, he had one, two, three sons, they still live in **Israel**, and I met them – no, four sons actually, because the fifth son, th-the – he died in concentration camp. So – and I met them when I was in **Israel** about eight years ago, 10 years ago the first time. And then I met them about three or four years ago when I was in **Slovakia** when we had the reunion with people from the labor camp. And then in **Michalovce** they dedicated a plaque on a building, it was the official – the – not the city hall, the – the – the – what is more than the city – I-I mean, the around all the – how you call the office? Actually [indecipherable] there – there – there was a – there were the – we had in **Michalovce** the big synagogue, because we have many of them like I mentioned before, and this were the biggest synagogue, and this were destroyed – actually damaged during the war, and then nobody want to take it

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over, so they **turned** it down after the war. And there, on these plates, they build the building on the district – the office of the district of **Michalovce**, and there they dedicated a plaque in Slovak and in Hebrew that it – there on this place was a synagogue for the Jews who were – who were killed in the concentration camp during the war, and I think even they say the – no, not – the numbers, I think th – are not there, how many of them. But that's – and this – I have saw here a picture for it. I – maybe it will be [**indecipherable**] these pictures here. I have got – I have to check, I will check –

Q: Y-You left your father wi-with – in this – with this family –

A: With a Christian, yeah it was a wind – a widow.

Q: And you were gonna – you were gonna come back.

A: N-Na – no, I don't – I don't say I come back, I said that I will send someone, a Christian, you know, from – over from the mountains, who will pick him up and bring that to the forest, that he go to – go in hidin – into hiding.

Q: And what happened?

A: And, it was the exact date when they has – the guy has to come, and like I – I came down there, because the guy came to me, and he said, he went there to the apartment and my father wasn't there already. And the woman told him that he – because he's supposed to come – to come around six – 6:30 in the morning. And he couldn't wait, he was afraid because the German were – were making **razzias**

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all over, and were looking for Jews to take to the concentration – because it was actually one of the last – the last **aktionen**, what the German were looking for Jews to take concentration camp. So he was afraid, like the guy told me – the women told him, that he was afraid that they will come in to pick him up. So he left her apartment around five o'clock in the morning, that means about one and a half or two hours earlier than he's supposed to be there. And when he came, like I mentioned already, he came to there – because it was not far on the outskirts of the city of **Nova Mesto**(ph), and all – exactly out of the outskirts was a military barracks, and he went this way out of that city, because he knew actually where he's supposed to go, where he's supposed to – the guy is supposed to take him. So there they confronted him, they wanted identification, even he had Christian papers. So, you know, they immediately saw on him that he was **[indecipherable]** so they took him inside in the – on the **kommandatura**. And there they saw actually – they saw that he is Jewish, and so they took him then to **Sered**, and from there they took him to the concentration camp where he **[inaudible]** yeah, to **Auschwitz**, yeah.

Q: And – and you heard about this when you get – when – from this man.

A: Yeah, but he died, he di – I hi – I heard from him here in the **United States** when I came in 1960 – in 1971, so – and my sister told him that it – talked to him, because he was from the same city from where we were, he was from **Michalovce**,

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and he said that he went with the same transport, and with the – he came to **Auschwitz**, so he was a – he was a tall guy, and he was much younger with my – than my father, so they took him to – **Mengele** too – took him to the right side for work, and my father went a few, maybe 10 or 15 people in front of him, **Mendele** – **Mengele** took him to the left, to the oven.

Q: When your father didn't – didn't come back with this man, what did you think?

A: I-I actually met this man – I heard about him, but I met him actually here in the **United States**. Then when he told me that my father went –

Q: But th-then, did you think that he had been taken away by the Germans?

A: Yeah, because – yeah, because the – the guy who came from this woman, they told him – she told him that probably went to there, because if he didn't **[indecipherable]** and I didn't find him, not during the war, that means from end of October or so til after the war, so I knew that he went there.

Q: What were you thinking at – or at all about your rest of your family?

A: So, we were waiting because then, after – few weeks after the war, I was waiting, I went back to **Michalovce**, and was looking. So then I saw a – after few weeks, my one sister came back, **Haide(ph)**, some times in June, I think. And then I heard someone came from **Budapest**, that my younger sister is alive. So we were waiting for it, you know, after few days or few weeks, the other sister, who lives here in **Detroit**, **Tullulah(ph)**, came back, so we met together in **Michalovce**, but

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we didn't know what to do. And then we had – if I can continue now after the war, we had the aunt in **Vranov**, this was about 35 miles from **Michalovce**, she was a first cousin of my father. So she heard – they were looking and someone – I don't remember how – if she heard about us, or we heard about her. Actually, we went there to **Vranov**, to her, with her. We stayed there from – for awhile, and she says that we can stay there, we will look if someone from the family will come back or not. So then I had a friend in **Michalovce** who was me – who was we – with me together in labor camp. And he told me that he has a uncle in **Liberec**. This is about 65 miles north of **Prague**. And he has a wholesale store here they gave him back, the Czechoslovak government, because he had this wholesale store before the war, in hardware store and plumbing supply. So – and this was my profession what I was working during the war. So he somehow connected with him, and he told me he was looking for someone who is responsible, and who is – who can trust for – and who can trust, may – and I can get the job there. So I went there and introduced myself, and he hired me. So it was in January – exactly in January 1946. And between the – this time what we in – in **Vranov**, in **Michalovce**, we went to **Prague** end of the year to look for someone if we were – some on the Jewish organizations, if they will give some on the Red Cross, if they will give some – some i-information about our family members, but we didn't get anything. So my sister went back to **Vranov**. They were there for a few months, and I stayed

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the **Liberec** already, I started to work there. And then – but I [indecipherable] and then in – in **Prague**, I met some cousins from **Slovakia**, from **Orlich(ph)**, who were in **Prague**, stayed in **Prague**, and one of them was – one brother of this cousins, he was in the Czechoslovak army in **Russia**, and he came to **Prague**, was sometimes in middle s-summer, sometimes in August or September. So – and because he was ma – a soldier in the Czechoslovak army in **Russia**, he was fighting through the front and everything. So they had advantages that they gave those people who was in the concentration camp, or who was fighting against the German, like partisans or – or in the military, that he can get certain stores or factories, what it – after there was took over from the Germans. So this two cousins actually were received, they get a store in **Jablonce(ph)**. This was about eight miles from **Liberec**. It was a store what – with china, you know, with glass, china, so [indecipherable]. So then my sisters came over to **Jablonce(ph)**, sa – first they stayed with me in **Liberec** for many, many months, maybe a year or so. And I – in ma – my sister, yeah, she stayed in **Liberec** the whole time. And then my younger sister started to date, actually it was the brother of my cousin. And they get married in 1948, and my sis – other sister, she started to date her next husband, a Mr. **Joe Dushinski(ph)**. So she get married, and they stayed in **Liberec** til end of 1950 or the 1950s, when they escaped from **Czechoslovakia** and went to **Germany**, from **Germany** to **Canada** and from **Canada** to the **United States**. My

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younger sister **Lola**, when she got married in 1948, end of 1948, yeah. He went – they went, I think with the **Haganah** to **Germany** and to **France**, to **Paris** where they stayed there about I think for two years or so, I don't remember exactly. And then they made corresponding because we had many relatives, first cousin, aunts and uncles here in the **United States**. So actually, they helped them, that after two years or so they gave them a – th-they received a visa to **Canada**. They stayed there for a few months or so, and then they received a visa, they came here to the **United States**. Between this time, my other sister **Haide**(ph), with her husband, they escaped [indecipherable] money, I gave some money because he have to like bribe and give money for someone who knew the way to go to the border, to german – to east **Germany**. And they went to **Berlin**, and from ber – from east **Berlin** to have – to have tams – again for money, they went to west **Berlin**, and waiting for the papers the same way they received from our relatives the paper, the visa, because they were first cousin and uncles. They went to **Canada**, they came to **Windsor**, ma – first to **Halifax**, I think. They stayed there from **Halifax** to **Windsor**, and then after I don't know, for I think it was in 1952 or '51 or something like that, they came to the **United States**, to **Detroit**, because here in **Detroit**, we have the – a cousin here, who was born here in the **United States**.

Q: Now, wha – when you were living – living in **Liberec** with your sisters, did you talk about what went on during the war?

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A: About what?

Q: About wha – what happened during the war.

A: With who? With –

Q: With your sisters.

A: Yeah.

Q: And –

A: Then – then I actually, because even [**indecipherable**] and then actually the older sister – the younger sister told me how she was to concentration camp – camp, how she survived the concentration camp. And the other sister was – she was in hiding, she was in camp somewhere, all over there. She didn't want to talk. I don't want – I don't know, even today – actually – and I – I probably know certain things what I – I have suspicions but I cannot tell because I am not certain what's happened with her, so – I don't know why. She doesn't trust him. If she have – after – years after the war, if I started to talk her, she was shaking and she was – so, I let her, but –

Q: What was life like there then, after – right after the war. I mean, what – for the next five years or so?

A: The – after the war it was – everybody was thinking, because it was really a democratic government. President **Beneš**, who escaped in 1939 to **London**, he came back. First came **Košice**, 1945, they established a new democratic

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Czechoslovak government. Then, after a few weeks, they came to **Prague** with a big celebration, everything, because it's again the new Czechoslovak government. But what had happened, the Russians, actually **Stalin**, even during the war, and it was the fault of the American government of **Roosevelt**, actually, and **Truman**, that they would trust – they trusted to **Stalin**, and even in 1945 they made the agreement in **Tehran**, **Stalin** with **Churchill** and **Roosevelt**, that how far the American army, when they will liberate **Europe** and **Germany** and other, how far they can go. Because actually **Prague**, and the mostly part of **Czechoslovakia**, the American army was actually on the outskirts of **Prague**, and the Russian didn't let them farther to go, and the Russians were far away, because they said it was agreement between **Russia** and the **United States**. So the American army had to pull back, move west approximately to the city of **Posen** in **Czeska**(ph) **Budavitsa**(ph) and then they stayed. And the people were waiting til the Russian came into **Prague**, because **Stalin** wanted political reasons it was, that **Czechoslovakia** would be influenced later on, ac – or – ma – with the – the gover – the – under a communist government. So actually then it was big celebration that the Russian army liberated **Prague** and liberated **Czechoslovakia**, because the true was that the whole **Slovakia** and **Moravia**, the Russian army liberated. So it was then, and it went to the history that the Russian army celebrated **Czechoslovakia**. Even the true is that the American army cel – liberated mo – the

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biggest part of the **Bohemia** of Czech – o-of the Czech part of **Czechoslovakia**, but the Russian didn't let them go farther.

Q: Did you know this then? Did you know all this then?

A: After many – after the year, til it was in 1946 - '47, but not later, because later, when in av – February the 25th, in 1948, the communists took over the government. So then actually, was it all over that only the Russian army and the Russian people liberated **Prague** and **Czechoslovakia**. So it started to work the communist propaganda and it just – everybody to believe that it was only the Russian and Russian and Russian and from – excuse me, from this time out it was all thing – everything what the American did what – everything wrong, and everything – they wanted to – to take away everything from **Czechoslovakia**, from the factories and everything, because – so, it wa – the – sta – the Russians started – the Russian and the communist government started to br-brainwash the people in the **Czechoslovakia**, and most of the people believed them.

Q: Did you believe them?

A: Well, sometimes no – s-sometimes yes, sometimes no. Sometimes I suspicious, but especial later on, when we had the opportunity to listen in hiding to the Voice of **America**, the – on radio, suddenly it – then it opened our eyes. Then – then we knew what really the true is.

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Q: Well – well, life under the communists then, wa – was it – was it awful, was it –

A: Actually, it was no much different like under the German, only this was – the difference was, they didn't went straight on not – the – after the Jews, but they went – if they heard something, everybody was afraid to openly to say tha – his opinion. Everybody what –

End of Tape Four, Side A

Beginning Tape Four, Side B

Q: This is a continuation of a **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with **Mikulas Judikovic**. This is tape four, side **B**.

A: It was so far that even a – a neighbor who didn't like a neighbor, or a – so he started to – to have against him personally, and he went to the secret police or to the police and said, look, this – my neighbor, he said the – the Russian were stealing our liberation and he praised the American, it was enough. Immediately came the secret police, took him away. And many people even disappeared, exactly never heard about them. And so the people were afraid. One neighbor was afraid the other neighbor. The people started not to trust even their closest friends, because this time the secret police started to look for informants. So you never knew even your next neighbor, or your next guy who was working with you in the office or factory – actually, the people didn't trust. And it happened that even

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children went to the police and told to the police that something for own – own parents or something. And it was that they disappeared or they went to jail, and very seldom that they came back. So it was a terror, actually. It – it was sometimes worst than under the German. And then, even it was so far that **Stalin** send advisors, his advisors – it was like secretive, what knew only later on, civilian advisors, not even to the government, but even to – into factories, and it started the end of 1949, that it started a trial against people, against communists who were in high positions even before the war in **Czechoslovakia**. And even during the war, who were suffering, who were in concentration camps. But **Stalin** wanted to get rid of them because he was afraid that probably they were a little more moderate. And then it came actually, it so-called the month of 1950, when the – it was then, it was the communist government in **Czechoslovakia**, that they went after people who di – they didn't trust, even if – if – if no reason, but they didn't trust, they took them and they started big trials in **Czechoslovakia** and they took actually what was the biggest trial, 14 people who were in high positions, even in th – after the war, in the communist party, or in the government, in the communist government. And they made the trial that they were **Trotskys** and they were spies against **Russia**, against the – **Stalin**, against [indecipherable] government in **Czechoslovakia**. And they had the big trial, and they – beti – between these 14 people were, I think, 12 or 13 Jews. And I think 12 of them, or 13, they're

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sentenced to die. They were hanged, or they were shot. All Jews, no ba – event, they were shot between th-that [indecipherable] so-called the **Slanksy**(ph) trial. He was a Jew but he was a big, high position in the communist party even before the war already. So they get rid of all the Jews. About two survived, but all the Jews were liquidated, what was – they all was – all were high ranking communist officials.

Q: Did you feel –

A: And then it started – yeah, I'm sorry, you have the question?

Q: Did you feel that this kind of –

A: Ah, that's what I want to continue. I felt immediately, because in this time, in 1949 and 1950 – 1949 already, they took me – the police came to me and they took me to the police. They were asking me what happened with my younger sister, with **Lola**. So I told them that in 1948, I – they disappeared, I don't know nothing about them. They didn't believe me. They kept me there about for a day or so. They let me go, but they called me many times. I was about four or five times there on the police, asking questions, a – who – ho-how many relatives I have in **America**, where I have relatives, what I am doing, what I – my corresponding is, with whom I am corresponding and so on. And then in the 1950, my sister **Haide**(ph) what – she left **Czechoslovakia**, that was a nightmare for me, because then they took me again to the police, and they hold me for a few days, two t –

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three days. Even in that it happened that I get pushed to the wall. Then even a day – a slap my fa – I get a slap on my face that I ha-hold my own hand. I don't know if I even told my wife some ta – this. Then they let me – this wasn't so easy because I wanted to go. They told me that I knew how my sister, both sister left **Czechoslovakia** and til I won't tell them, they will keep me and they will send me to **Jáchymov**. That was a uranium mine, when they put the ra – uranium from mines, and all the uranium was sending to **Russia**, because they made that – probably the atomic bomb or so. And usually people who went – that was people who were sent to **Jáchymov** to the uranium mines, that was criminals, that was poli – who were politically – politically no-not trustworthy, and very few people came back from there. They died. And if after many, many years someone came back, his health was completely – they get – they have cancer when they came back, most of them died, and very few survived more years in there, they let her go after fef – 15 or 20 years, or sometimes it happened where they saw someone get very sick and had some connections, so they let him go, but still – they let him go home, but after many year – after a few years died because of cancer from the uranium, from the exposures to – to radiation.

Q: When – when they – when you were being questioned by the police, did – did that bring back memories of when you were being held by the Germans?

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A: Very much so. And I can tell you, I have to mention maybe that they let me go after a few days or so, if – it was because my wife, she was working in an office, and her president of the office was – because it was a – for the – the main office for all the restaurants there, it was about 1500 people. He had some connection, the – her boss had some connection with the police. So my wife probably told him, so he actually, through my – my wife, through him, heard that the police let me go. But that's later on, like I mentioned, my wife later on couldn't keep high position jobs because they knew that her husband has relatives in **America**, so they didn't trust her. So then, later on she was only like a clerk, because before she was in a higher position, like a – in charge of the personnel department, from all the people. Then they – they – she couldn't keep this job, because they didn't trust her. So actually, they put her in a lower position there. But they needed her because, I have to tell, she was a very good clerk, she was very smart and very capable to do things. And her boss was great, because she did many work what she – he's supposed to job – do. So actually, he didn't have to work so much, and other people who were in charge. So actually, they used her to work more because they knew that she has to if she wants to keep even the lower job. So but – like I mentioned before, we knew that after years and many times the police were watching us specially. And like I mentioned before, the last time, we knew exactly the – why they came to our apartment when we were at work and were checking

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well – if they will find some letters or something, some material what they can use special against me, that I am in connection somehow with my sisters, or with relatives in **America**.

Q: You mean they searched – they searched your house while you were –

A: Re – re – they searched our house. Maybe they were mare – money – more times, but twice we knew exactly because w-we, like I mentioned, in our closets we recognized, we knew, because w-we knew – we heard that they are doing this kind of work, the secret police, so we – exactly on purpose, we put certain things in our closets that we could then recognize that something – someone was there. And so the – actually, all those years, we were living with my wife, we couldn't travel so much like we would like to. And they were watching – they were watching us, all our steps. Because we were feeling and we saw suspicious people around us, along the – outside our apartment and so, because they were watching who is coming to our apartment. Maybe they are watching where we are going, with whom we are friends, with whom we are in connection. So that was **[indecipherable]** that was the reason – and in 1968, then – my sister – I'm a little too far a-ahead, but in 1968 is when my sister's family – because here in the family, like I think I mentioned, was a Bar Mitzvah in the family and a wedding in the family, here in **Detroit** and in **Chicago**. So, after – they sent me airline ticket, and I – invitation that I could come to visit. But they – I knew in advan – yeah,

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between the older [indecipherable] once a year and twice a year, my sister – I received a letter from one sister, from the other sister. But in this time, in **Czechoslovakia** they had the qui – equipment, because someone told me later on after years, that they could read the letters who wanted – who – special letters who came from the western countries. So actually, before I got the letter, and it was a certain stamp, a letter stamp on the envelope, so actually they, under the secret police, maybe in **Prague** already, or in **Liberec**, they actually read all the letters what I received. So they knew what they – what th-they are writing. And this taught me – someone later on af – sometime in the 60s, I think he was in the secret police, I am not sure, but I knew he – I went to school with him. And he – one day he was drunk, and I met him, so – and he started to talk and I was asking him, so I felt between his word what he was talking, that that – that’s what the police, because he told me actually, they said, look, we knew everything, what’s going on everybody, because we knew in a – everything what’s going on because we had equipment what we [indecipherable]. So, in 1968 when I came here, it took me a lot of work, because I couldn’t get the visa to **America** before I get the permission, a paper from the police in **Liberec** that they let me go for a visit. So – and it took again th-the boss of my wife, he talked to someone of the police, so that’s where I could get the permission, and I went with the permission to the American embassy in **Prague**, that’s when I could get the visa. But they never let

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go a couple together, special when they didn't have children, and we didn't have children. So actually I knew in advance because when my sisters wrote me that they will invite us, so I told them in advance, they cannot – we couldn't get both of them. If I will lucky, I will get probably, but they had to pa – send the invitation only for one person, for me. And that's what happened. And I knew for exactly because they told me, you know, in the police when I went with – with the invitation what I received from my sister, I went to the police, as they told me, immediately. But it's – if we will decide, it will go only to you, not – but not your wife. Because they knew we didn't have children. So –

Q: So was – was this a lib – a kind of liberal thaw in the – wa-wasn't there a period when things got better in **Czechoslovakia**?

A: Only in 1967 - 1968. It was a little bit – the worst years were in th – from 1949 til 1962 - '64. Di –

Q: Was this the dub –

A: Especially the years from 1940 – 19 – 1955 - 1956.

Q: Was this the **Dubček** years?

A: The **Dubček** came only nine – in the spring of 1968. Then we felt a little more breeze about the more liberation [**indecipherable**] or so –

Q: You think that's why they let you out?

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A: No, it was on the list because it was in August nine – no, in July 1968. So, if it would be – actually, if it would be the – a year before, or two years before when it was really the strict communist government, not **Dubček**, I hardly could get permission from the police to get out.

Q: When did you meet your wife?

A: I met her in nine – in end of 1948.

Q: And what's her name?

A: **Bozena**. My wife **Bozena**, her name was – maiden name was **Shimkowa**(ph).

Q: And you met her in 1948, and when were you married?

A: In October 1949.

Q: T-Tell me a little bit about that.

A: So, I dated her about a year, and I really liked her. I – even I was not so very young, but I fell in love because first of all I wa – I – she was very much interested in things like I was interested. For example, we would **[indecipherable]** talk, we would like one day to travel, because I like to travel, and she had the same. And she like very much art, culture, theaters, operas. And that was – I always liked and just I read some material about that. So we started – we started to gay – to go in theaters to o – special an opera tim – ba-ballet together. And then we started – I bought a tent and **[indecipherable]** I think we were – we were dating already, that we would like to ca – go camping. So that's what I started – we started to do that.

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And I saw that we have common interests. We started to go dancing, so – and then I – I mean, I saw that she's a very smart girl, nice. So I knew what kind of position has, because she had the position that really was very capable to do this kind of work. So – and I was by myself, by – actually not, my sister was still living there. So that's when I married her.

Q: It must have been hard to leave her when you went to the **United States**.

A: Yeah, for visiting? Yeah, I-I was – when I went to the **United States**, I was certain that more, more, more, because the **Dubček** were in charge already that many more they – the western countries will help **Czechoslovakia** to get more rid of the communist-like government, that it will be some imperialistic government, or more democratic government, so that I will come back. I didn't – I didn't go to **United States** with this that I will stay here, because if it would be a year before, I would do that, because I knew under communist that I-I would be glad to get rid of the communist government, but now, if starting in spring of 1968 it goes always farther, farther, more liberalization, more democratic things started to come. So everybody thought it will finally get again a democratic Czechoslovak Republic. But in – with th – in this time, and [**indecipherable**] in the **United States**, it was for six weeks what I get the permission. That means the third or the second of September I was supposed to go back, and that was even my airline ticket. But in thi-this time, end of August, the 21st of August, I think, th – the communists, the

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Russian and the army from **Hungary**, from **East Germany**, from **Romania**, from **Poland**, occupied **Czechoslovakia**, so they closed the borders. So I was in the **United States**, my wife was actually over there. So, what I have to do? So – and my wife was in this time in **Yugoslavia**, on vacation with her cousin, be a – with a 10 years old boy. So, she immediate – when the **Czechoslovakia** occupied, so she immediately went from **Yugoslavia** back to **Czechoslovakia** because the parents of the boy were afraid that – what’s happened. So they – she went back to **Czechoslovakia**. I was in the **United States**, she was over there. And then when what’s happened, so my relatives all, they told me look, we are going to the immigration office. You will stay here, because what’s happened there. We will do everything possible that your wife will come here too. And then, because I told them, I don’t want to stay here if she is there, I am here. So my brother-in-law went with me here in **Detroit** to the immigration office, and they told me – I didn’t speak English, so he was the interpreter. They told me yeah, we can make now because this situation is, it will be easier that I could stay here, and we will make everything possible if she can get out from **Czechoslovakia**, that she will receive immediately visa. But we cannot guarantee how she will get out from there. So I said look, I will go back, I will do – if I will be there – because it ose – and they said don’t worry, they will let her go as soon as we’ll go to phone her, we will write her. She will get the permission, she will get out. And I said look, if the

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Russians are – if it would be a government under **Dubček**, it will be different, but this is a government the Russians are there. And I know what it means to live under communists. So never they would let her go – maybe after awhile or so. And I said, I cannot – I cannot stay here, I cannot let her there because she doesn't know all those ways how to go sh – there. She has no experience in this kind of thing, and I have to go back. The-They were crying, they were bul – everything, my relatives. And I went back. And when – interesting enough, one of my nephews – because I – one nephew, he had Bar Mitzvah in July here. So I was at the – the other nephew, his Bar Mitzvah supposed to be in April next year. And he was crying and crying, and said, Uncle **Mitu(ph)**, you are here at the Bar Mitzvah for **Stanley**, and you won't be here on my Bar Mitzvah, and I will – and I told him, **Irwin(ph)**, I promise you, I will do everything possible. When I will be there, I will make all the possible things – if I couldn't be here on your Bar Mitzvah, I will be here with you on your wedding with your aunt, with my wife. I make this your promise. And so I went back, but I couldn't go straight to **Czechoslovakia**, so I flew from here to **Yugoslavia**, because I had to change my airline ticket, and I went to the place where my wife was on vacation, she wasn't there any more. So I went back by train to **Prague**, and then I met my wife and saw – and I told her the story and I said, I will try immediately I told her, I will try everything. We have to go back and we have to go to **America**. We cannot stay because it will be a terror

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here. So, she didn't want for, she was crying and so on. But then later on th – I was working on her [indecipherable] and then she saw too what's going on, how it goes, the situation. So and then we made, sometimes in March, we start with a little more, not so strict like it was the first month. So we went to – to police, we ask for a permission to go to **Hungary** for vacation. Yeah, when I came back, people – friends what I met on the street, they didn't even greet me to welcome me or something. Everyone only showing knock on the head that I was so st – they didn't te – tell me anything, only to show me that I was stupid that I came back. So then we was working in mat – thr – thr – again through ma – through this – her boss, and we get permission to go to **Hungary** because we had some friends. And then we had to bribe in the bank, because you ca – to go to **Yugoslavia**. If you wanted to go to **Yugoslavia**, you had to get a permission from the bank, that the bank gave you currency, Yugoslavian currency, that you go to a vacation for **Yugoslavia**. So that – we bribed some clerk in the bank, because it was always a committee who was deciding if they allowed you, if they give you the money, Yugoslavian money that you go – can go to **Yugoslavia**. So that's what it happened, I-I get the permission to go to yu – th-the money to go into **Yugoslavia**. So I went again to the police, I had the permission to **Yugoslavia**, actually [indecipherable] needed. I get the permission there, because I had the per – the money from **Yugoslavia**. So I get the per-permission from the police that I can go.

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They put up a – a stamp in my passport that I can go **Yugoslavia**. And then we have to bribe someone on the police to a – a friend of mine. We gave money to him, he gave some money to a policeman. So he gave permission to us that we can go to **Yugoslavia** through **Austria**. And it was for 48 hours. And I had the cousin who still lives in **Czechoslovakia**, in **Košice**, and she told me that if I can get the permission to **Austria**, to **Vienna**, then I can go to **HIAS**, to a Hebrew immigration office, and then I can stay and they take care of me to get out from **Europe**, anywhere. So that what we did to, what I'm saying it's very simple, but it took much of nerves, a lot of weeks, almost all our money what we got. It cost us money what we bribe. And it was nerve breaking til we get all those papers and everything. So only one cousin of my wife, and my cousin in **Košice**, they knew that we are preparing to leave. Even she told me my cousin in **Košice**, as soon as wa – we were b – lucky and come to **Vienna**, that I have to write her, and they may – they – they will make immediately steps that they will come after us to **Vienna**. But in between this is a other story, her husband changed his mind, he didn't want **[indecipherable]** this stay there. And he wa – he felt sorry til today for visiting last few years them, he felt sorry all the time that he didn't came after us. Then when we – so we – yeah, and then it happened in May the 30th, 1940 – 1969, actually we left **Czechoslovakia**. And where we lived in the apar – I had a car already. In this time I bought a car, it happens – this is other story, how it was

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difficult. It was permission from the company, but we had the car. We had the – we had the application for a new car two years before, because it take always a committee who decided who will get the car, because it was har – very had to get the car, a permission to buy a car, if you had the money. And you have – you had to put down 60 percent of the price of the car in a bank. It was blocked in a bank that you had the money. So I had the car about for a year or so. That's about half **[indecipherable]** almost a new car. And so we were preparing, we – so I parked my car in front of the building, it was on a main street. And the day before – and we had all the permissions and everything. So a day before, to the evening, we started to take some stuff, what we will need for the vacation, and put in the car. Because I had the garage, so we are leave the car over the ma – overnight in the garage. And because we wanted to leave early in the morning, as soon as possible. So – and then we – and I knew from the time when we came back from – when I came back from **America**, special then in the months after new year, February, March, we were watching, again by the secret police. And then I was – when we were taking down all the stuff into the car, and then not far away, maybe 60 or 70 yards, it was a corner, a building, and there was a restaurant. And we saw that some guy in rain clothes – in plain clothes that's – was go – walking around. And sometime he stopped there, reading a paper, went inside in the restaurant, and from the restaurant was a window straight to our apart – to the car where – where I

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was parking. It was about 70 yards. And then again he came out, he ge – went around the corner, and again get the newspaper, and then to the restaurant. So we knew exactly, because we knew all those kind of things what they are doing because all the secret – so we knew immediately that someone is watching us. So if I describe you, or if you – I can't [indecipherable] it wasn't so smooth. I will try to be really short. And around mor – in the morning, around 4:30 or five o'clock, it was May the 30th or the 31st – the 31st, we left **Liberec** and went on the way to **Hungary**. So we stopped during the night in a little town – you stop? It then – then it was **Bratislava**, it was on the border, actually on Czech and **Moravia**. And then we stopped during the night in a camp, to stay overnight. And then [indecipherable] that we will go [indecipherable] so me, my wife –

End of Tape Four, Side B

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Beginning Tape Five

Q: This is a continuation of the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with **Mikulas Judikovic**, on April 14th, 1997 at his home in **Southfield, Michigan**, and the interviewer is still **Sidney Bolkosky**. This is tape five, side **A**.

A: So my wife was afraid to tell her mother that we are leaving, and that we are trying not to come back, because she knew, and I knew too, that if she would tell her mother that she is not coming back, she would start to cry and to scream, and she didn't – she wouldn't never let her go. So we di – she didn't tell her mother. We stayed overnight in this camp. In the morning there was about a two hours drive to **Bratislava**. There we stayed na – about a half a day. And then we went from **Bratislava**, it was very close, about maybe 10 or 15 kilometers to the border. And usually, at the border to the **Hungary** – to **Hungary**, it was you came to the border, and the Slovaks took only the papers, you were straight on the road. There was a – there was a soldier who took the papers, identification, if you had permission, he let you go. But when we came to the stor – soldier, he took our papers and everything, showed the name, and suddenly he send us around, up to the main building, where the customs were. So we knew immediately that something is not kosher. So we went there, and we saw when we were there the soldier took our identification and then we thought that have to go up, we saw a custom guy was standing in – at the door there. And came out a other custom and

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he probably told him, because he showed downstairs, he said probably, those are the people. We come upstairs and he took our papers, and – both of them, they were standing – where are you going? And I said that we're going to **Hungary**, that we're going to **Yugoslavia**, so on. And he said, you know what? Drove – drive your car behind the building. So I knew immediately it's not good – good. So I drove the car behind the building. There was a – the long table, and he said okay, but we would like to see what you have in your car. Take out everything from your car. So we took out everything on the car, or took – or put on the table. And we had our tent, we had [**indecipherable**], we had a stove, everything like we go for vacation to – for camping. And what we had in suitcase, everything out. And then he took out – and that car had the engine in the back, you know it was – and the – the – the trunk was in the front. So, he took the front – he took out our spare tire. They took – pull up the battery from the trunk. And it took about an hour, all this checking and everything what they did. And people down on the road, other people were traveling and they left. Everybody were looking up because they saw from – from the street – from the road that we are standing, and customs are standing there, and with all the stuff there. And can you imagine that where the glove department is, there was – I found out that was a little, like space. And it come to my mind what I had at home with my prayer book. So – and I found out – so there I hide some papers, what – her birth certificate, some other papers.

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[**indecipherable**] had a few **krones(ph)**, some money and other documents what we had, what we knew if they will find it, it's finished. They were let – they knew that something is wrong, that we taking some money with us [**indecipherable**] because they checked our – our purses, our – our – my – my wife's purse and everything. So if they would find these kind of papers, what we – why I need papers, my documents, what I went to school, or when my wife – wife does – so there I was hidden, but it was so narrow, that later on when I had to take it out, I scratched my hand, because it was very hard to take out. And they opened the glove department, they looked behind, but didn't realize, because it was something like hidden, so they didn't see that this is – this is actually a – a secret space there. This was – they were lucky. So after about an hour they didn't find – they didn't find the space there. After about an hour or so, and even – you know I said it's – I – I have to – to mention, my wife used to make **iyer(ph)** cognac, natur – because she liked it, so here and there she tried to st – you know what's **iyer(ph)** cognac is now? This is a – a liqueur, this is made from eggs – eggs and liqueur, you know, and it's very – so sweet, you can hardly get drunk or so. And the oth – on the way, she usually lit – taked a – from the – from the bottle, a taste, and til we came there to the customs, she was a – a little so in good mood, you know. And suddenly when it was all over with the checking [**indecipherable**] everything was outside, and suddenly she stepped like this and she said, gentlemen, could you tell me

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please, what are you looking for? Maybe I can help you. And I said, be quiet. We don't be th – nasty to gen – because I saw that they – they were a little so – not so – so straight, like they were before when the – they were so strict, they were talking to us like we were some robberies or something, or criminals. And then in to the end, after an hour, both of them were so – a little softer. And I told her **[indecipherable]** quiet, don't – and okay, so – and she says so, can I put back the – yeah, you can. So okay, so **[indecipherable]** and so she started slowly with here, and I said, take everything through it in. If they would let us go, we will be – as soon as we can be away from it better. Okay, then I help her, we started to throw it only in the car and everything. And then they told us, come – come with the car in the front of the building, stop there. Because they had all the papers, everything. So, I stopped there and so they let you go, but then he stopped, and I said okay. They gave the papers, and I said, you know when – and when you went from **Czechoslovakia**, you had to fill out a piece of paper, what you are taking out. And then you had to show on the border when you come back, if you brought it – everything back and what you brought back. And I said, but yo – I have the passport and the papers, I don't have the paper what it says when I come back and show the – the – for the customs what I took out and what took back. And he says, I gave it to you. And I said, but I don't have here. Yeah, and th – and then my wife says, oh, maybe yeah, I think I have here between the papers, I have it. So – and I

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said, because we have to – and I told them even, I – we have to be back because my wife has some examinations, she went to – to a college school and took courses, she took – and I said, three days later she had the examinations, so we have to bring back, and I don't want to have some troubles when I come back. I gave it to your wife. Again. Well, she says, maybe I as – my wife said, maybe I have here. So we went, we came, yeah, and we stayed there on our seaside – not seaside, it was a big lake where we have friends who usually we stayed o – for vacations every year. So we thought we will stay there for a week or 10 days with them. So we stopped there, and we say we are going to **Yugoslavia** and we will stay for a few days. Who said – and the la – the – our friend says oh, that's good, good, good, we'll stay – and then during the night I couldn't sleep, it was from Saturday to Sunday, I remember like today. And I said, you know what – I told my wife, I think so – I would stay not one more day, because if they made those search on the border, they immediately sent a cable to **Liberec** that we went to the gi – border, they let us. And if we will stay in **Hungary**, this is still a communist country, they can make immediately there's a stop in **Hungary**, and they send us back. And I said, today is Sunday, they – the office is in **Liberec** closed. So better if as soon as we'll go away – okay, my wife didn't want to, so **[indecipherable]** says, that's okay, we go. So I turned to my friend, listen, you know we wanted better we will stop more days in **Yugoslavia**, and then we will come back sooner,

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we will stay with you when we come back, because it doesn't say that – we want so – at least two or three days or so, and I says no, we better because they said it's a nice weather there in yugo – okay, so we went. We came to the border on **Hungary and Yugoslavia**. They stopped us, they told us the Hungarian customs, wait in the car. So we wait in the car. We wait five minute, 10 minutes, 15 minutes long, nobody came out. So then I said oh, this is not good. And I said because maybe from **Bratislava** they sent a message to the Hungarian border to stop us and to check us. So it took about 20 minutes. Other people were coming down, other customs let them go, only to [indecipherable] and us they st – we were sitting in the car from 20 minutes. And then suddenly they came out, they pull up the hood, they pull up the hood for the engine, they pull up the hood from the trunk. And there were – in front of us was a boss, you know people were standing, came around, people standing around, you know, they were nose – no – no – mousey – nosey to see what's going on. So it took about five, 10 minute here. He took everything back up, something he took out, then put back, you know the Hungarian customs. Then said – take the steps. Okay, you can go. We can – and immediately was the border, it was only a small river, a bridge. We came – immediately was the Yugoslavian customs. Came to Yugoslavian customs, I show them the paper, open the window. Immediately, okay, you taking, what you are going, for how long, I said oh, he gave the stamp. We left . Well, we came to

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Yugoslavia, so we went to the seaside, about – and we thought that we will stay there til we will go to **Austria**, we will stay about for a few days, a little, to relax.

Q: In Dubrovnik?

A: No, it was very close to dubr – yeah, th-the – next to the – between dubr – **Dubrovnik** and **Split**. And then we stayed about for three, four days in a camp, and I said to my wife, you know, I am so nervous. Better if here the opportunity come, we will go to **Vienna**, to **Austria**. We will see what happen maybe there we will go. And then my wife said okay, because she saw in everything what was going on, all these borders. And I still – I said I didn't even trust – I didn't trust the Slovaks, I didn't trust the Hungarian, and you know what? I don't even trust Yugoslavian. Ega – even **Yugoslavia**, it was in even this time more liberal and many people escape after the Russian came into **Yugoslavia** from **Czechoslovakia**. So okay, we went, immediately we went to **Austria**, we came to the Yugoslavian side on the border. They – after – w-we stayed about four days there in **Yugoslavia**. They gave us the stamp only through the window, I didn't have even to get out. Then we came to the Austrian side, they pull up the – the – the thing to – on the border what they have there, you know –

Q: The barrier.

A: The barrier and they – only there came the Austrian soldier or custom, I don't remember. And he want the passport, he wanted the visa. And – and you know

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what he wanted? He wanted the international insurance of my car. So that's – I show him I had, and then he let us immediately go. I cannot express what I said on the tape, what my expression was. If you can stop for a moment.

Q: Sure.

A: And I told to my wife, you heard the big jump, the big noise [**indecipherable**] and I – she says, no, and says, what happened? How a big stone fell from my heart. And I said, now even President **Husák** can lick my behind. So – because now we are finally in a free country, and we are free. Can you – and I started to cry, you know, I started to cry. So that – that was a so – then, we came to **Vienna**, it was sometime late in the evening, and it – the next day it was a holiday in – in the **Austria**. So we stayed in a camp. The next day we went immediately in the morning to **HIAS**, and I registered, and then was – I spoke German. And then was on **HIAS** in the office a woman, make a registration, and so on. And I had my papers, I took out my birth certificate and so on. And he was still proof if I am really Jewish. And he said – he asked me the question, so if you are Jewish, where is the – what is the highest holiday in our religion? I said, **Yom Kippur**. And I said, you know what? When I got up in the morning, you know what was my first word – word? [**speaks Hebrew here**]. You know what it means, that translation? Thank you God – God upstairs **hermelek**(ph), the king of all the holy works, and so on. And I said, do you believe me? I – I didn't talk about the pull down the

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pants. Yeah, so – and the women – we were laughing. She says, yeah, yeah. And she says, don't be mad, because we had, after the Russian came in, we had many people, Christian who came here and they said that they are Jews, because they knew that the Jewish organizations take more care of them than the Christians in their o-organizations, you know, the Catholics and all these organizations. Say, Christians came and they had – and the woman told me, we had many occasions that Christians came to us, and we had to send them, give them the address we had, the Catholic organizations. So – and we stayed there, but now you could see in **Vienna**, people who were escaping from **Czechoslovakia**. Left cars on the street, left cars on the airport, because they couldn't sell. Everybody was glad to get rid, because they – as soon as they get permission go to **Canada**, to **Australia**, to **Sweden**, to **America** immediately. They di – they left everything there. And I had almost a new car, so – and I told this guy who asked me about the high holidays, you know, I said, do you know what? I have almost a new car, and I would like to get some money, because we don't have money, we don't have currency, nothing. If someone would give me some few shillings, some few hundreds, or some dollars or so. He says, you know what? I have a friend, he has a dealership, maybe he will buy because he's a Czechoslovak guy and sells Czechoslovak cars, wa – running, because **Czechoslovakia** was exporting some cars to **Austria**. So I went there, yeah, we stayed there in – in the – yeah, and they

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ga-gave us a address where we can go to stay a few nights til we're – that transport, because they started to, in this time were people, many people came from **Hungary**, from **Czechoslovakia**, from **Poland**, many people. So they made always a transport train – car, went straight to **Rome**, because in **Rome**, the **HIAS** was the main concentration, the main office. So after a – the second or third day he told me, you know what? Go show – there he gave me the address. Show the car, he probably will buy from you. So I went there, he liked the car, so he – he bought the car. So at least I didn't have to leave the car. He gave me, I don't know how many hundred dollars. So at least we had [indecipherable] some money. And I left the car with everything there, so I said, at least something. And then, usually after three or four days they make – they had the – had th-the 30 or 40 people, some a – sometimes even 70 people, so they made two rail cars, and send to **Vienna**. And – yo, and everybody has to go immediately, **HIAS** sent you to a doctor, he was a Jewish doctor, originally from **Poland**, but he lived in **Austria** for many years already, like for a check-up if you are capable, if you are able to go to take the [indecipherable] to go, or [indecipherable] to go to **Rome**. And we went there, and I started to tell him a little bit the story, what I went through, the few days. And I said, you know doctor, I've ba – ba – ap – appealed to you. We – my wife is not so healthy and I – you know, always this nervous break, what was. If you can give her some medication and to check her up more and after three or

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four days, if something really was happened, because she has kidney problems – problems, and it was true. And he told he – he started to talk to my Yiddish. And he says, in Yiddish, you know, tell me the truth, **Vienna** is a nice city. Probably you want to stay to see the city. And I telled him, you know what, it's one of the reasons too. A-And he said, you know what? I give you, you will stay two weeks in **Vienna**. Stay, but you know, and I thought to my wife – to myself, better to tell the truth straight and what happens, happen. And he – then he told me, you know, I like you because you told me that you liked to stay in **Vienna**. So then we – we stayed in **Vienna** for two weeks, so we looked a little, and at least it helped us, special me, get a little – a normal feeling, a normal life, because no – otherwise, I was on the bottom, really. I was completely eshi – exhausted – exhausted. So then we stayed there, and then we, after two weeks they send us to – to **Rome**. There we registered in the **HIAS**, and immediately – it was very good organized there, and immediately they gave us – because in **Rome** there were all over signs that say, lease apartments, special for refugees becal – twas meant – so, we took out an apartment. And the hia – **HIAS**, actually Joint, gave the money that what we paid for the rent, and they gave some pocket money that you can buy some food or something, minimum, but it was enough. And after three months or so, because when I went in **Czechoslovakia** gymnasium, I learned Latin, we had the subject Latin. So after three months I started to speak Italian. So then was the – the – the

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president in **HIAS** was a Romanian woman who spoke – spoke Hungarian. And then as – she saw that I spoke Italian, I spoke Hungarian, and I spoke Polish, and I spoke Russian, I spoke Czech. So – and the other woman my – my – who was in charge, my caseworker, she was a Romanian too, and she spoke – spoke Hungarian too. So said one thing to other, and I talked to them, so they hired me that I was a interpreter in **HIAS** for all those people, because many people came, special from **Poland**, from **Hungary**, from **Romania**. So I was working one year approximately on **HIAS** like a interpreter. So, me, my wife actually stayed in **Rome** 15 months. And between this time it helped a lot, because we received money like refugees, like everybody else. And beside that, Joint paid me like a employee on **HIAS**. So we started to travel a little bit in **Italy**, and I spoke Italian. So actually in – was in – my job was there. At least once a week, sometimes twice a week, I went to the railroad station in **Rome** every – in the morning, around eight o'clock in the morning. And always came one railroad car, or two cars, it depends how many people came. And in ad – in advance, I had all the names who is coming, how many people. And I have to tell you, I – some Italian police were accompanying each car from the border to **Rome**, that nobody can come in in those car. No Italian police to check if regular or not. And when they came to **Rome** to me at those stations, they knew me already, all those people. I **[inaudible]** have to tell you, I gave them money, because I had – I – I had the

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envelope from the Joint, from – I gave the two guys envelope and I told them – they told me, **buongiorno Mikula, buongiorno. A come sta**, how you feel and so on. I said, **buongiorno signore**, I gave them the envelope, **arrivederci**. And that's was I took over all the people I took them to **HIAS** for registration. There they get all – they received all the instruction farther, and then I was working **[indecipherable]** people to give adva – adva – advice, to help them what I have to do. And then I took all the pa – what someone had introduce on different consulates, you know for the visas or so on. So I went with them to interpret on the – on the consulate because I spoke Italian there. And then I took all the passports, and all papers, translation, everything, to all those consulates for what – for – for verification, because usually they get permission, the Italian government gave permission for refugees for three months. Who stayed longer, I had to go to the police, I had to go to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to get permission. So that's what I did for **HIAS**, what I went then – and then all the transport, what all they sent for example, many people to **Canada** or to us, or I accompanied these people to the airport. And sometimes people came illegally to – they send them from **Belgrade** or from **Bucharest**. So I went to the airport, I took over those people and took to the – not to the e-exit with other people, but to the – to the Italian police, you know, to the commandant of the airport. And he knew everything, so he gave the permission, and then when I took them to **HIAS**, you

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know, because those people didn't have visas. So that's what I – I did. I did a lot of this kind of things what helped people actually to come to **Italy** and then to help them to – to make translation, that – like a [**indecipherable**] a translator to them, even privately with the – with the – when they were looking for apartments, and so on. So I was busy enough, but during the weekend I could go out, so I can relax a little bit, so that's – we stayed there.

Q: Let me – let me just take you back for a second to [**indecipherable**]

A: I – I might even remember all these details and everything, but –

Q: You said that when you – when you were stopped at the border, and you had hidden your papers, you thought of the – the prayer book that you had hidden during the war. After the war, did you – did you go back to practicing Judaism?

A: I went, and in the begin – the first year, you know, this prayer book, the – I don't know what's happened, because maybe the – if something – because yeah, all the furniture, all the clothing, everything what we – when we left

Czechoslovakia we had to leave there, and the government took it over. Even they gave it to someone or someone – someone bought it. So an – for example, it was – and they took here and we – we were – after awhile when they saw that they – we didn't came back, they sentenced us, me and my wife to two years in prison in ab – in absentia, because we left illegally. So that means if we would go back during those period, there it was the communist, first we will go in jail, maybe they will

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for two years, maybe th – even more. So when they started to liquidate – before they started liquidate all our furnitures, and everything, so my wife’s mother went to the police. She wanted to get at least the couch what we had. She had to buy it, and it took her a lot of work. She get, and she had to pay the police to get the couch what belongs to her daughter. So she has – I told her – later she had enough guts even to go to the police, first of all. So then the first – the first – 1946 - '47, I used to go to a shul in **Liberec**. It was a small minyan, few Jews. But then when, special from 1948, it was very dangerous to show that you are religious, or you are keeping the – the – your faith, special Jewish faith. Even Christians, Christians were, under communism, were afraid to go to a church. They didn’t go, even they were religious. So then – and when I came back, in 1991, after 22 years, to **Czechoslovakia**, and I went to **Liberec** – so the first thing Friday evening I went – because I have a friend of mine, a Jewish guy who lived there, and I ask him, do you still have prayer, do you have some Jews here and so on. He says, hardly we make a minyan on Friday evening. So I said, I-I came there, and I came there Friday evening and made the minyan til we were about 10 or 11 people with – including me. And later – so then – oh, and this time was more, the later and later years, in 1933 - '34, it was hardly a minyan. So and some people told me, you know, I remember when I had about, in 1946 – '47 a old guy, so I remember you used to come, and so on. And then later on they had very few re – Jews. And then

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they came, for example, for the high holidays, they came Jews from cities or from villages who were about 10 - 20 miles away from **Michalovce**, so they came for the high holidays **[indecipherable]** little like one room what they have there.

From somewhere they get a Sefer Torah and a – all. And –

Q: Was that during the communist regime?

A: Yeah. And then he says, for example, even Friday evening when they don't have a minyan, so they pray even eight or nine people, and they have sa – two or three women, so said, we take the women like a minyan. And then i-in last few years, I was there last time about two years ago, yeah, two years ago, because I went every year there, Friday. And then later years I gave him I – a sum of money, I spent them some – left them some dollars to help him. And they were very grateful always. And now finally they're – after – after 1990, when it was **[break]** In 1991, there in **Liberec [indecipherable]** the whole house, so there was some apartments. Upstairs they were renting it. Downstairs, they had two rooms with everything, with Torahs and everything, with some curtains. And now, after about two or three years ago, they decided, and there in **Liberec**, where the German 1938 on **Kristallnacht**, they destroyed a beautiful, beautiful, nice, big synagogue, they – the Czechoslovak government and the Jewish organizations from **Prague** gave some money, and they are starting, I think, last year to build so-called library. But the main part of the library will be a Jewish synagogue with everything like a

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normal synagogue. Two years ago I say – I-I – they showed me the whole plan, even they have in – on tapes, pictures how the building will – will look, and it will be a bi – because now it is there a parking lot. So on the same place where the – a st – beautiful, in the center of the city, next to the big theater, and t-to city hall, actually, behind the corner, there will be built a new – a li – a new, big library, but the main part will be a beautiful, nice synagogue. So I am looking forward next – no, this year in – in September, I am going there, so – to **Liberec** so – because I will be in **Prague** and I will be staying in a spa. We are going there almost every year, there is a spa not far from **Liberec**, about 15 miles. It's for arthritis and it helps us, so there we are going every year. So I will go there, I will talk to my friend, and I'll look how far, what this – because last year I couldn't go there, I – even I was in the **Czech Republic**, but wait, I was there? Yeah, yeah, yeah, no, but it wasn't started yet, so I hope that started. And even he called me last year, and they received a van, because they have like a small community there now, about 15 people, about eight or nine families who live there. And they received a van, a used van from **Germany**, but they didn't have papers. So one day he wro-wro – I'm sorry – he wrote me a letter that if a – if I can ge – get someone papers from here, from General Motors, because it was a General Motors van, because otherwise the police in **Liberec**, they couldn't get Czechoslovak papers for the va-van because it was a present and they don't have the papers. So I called General

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Motors here. General Motors send me in **Canada** – what is the city, where they – they have a department on the foreign cars and the foreign – no. One moment **[indecipherable]** they had th-the foreign representative, what is for **Europe** representative, so gave me – they gave me – they – in **Czechoslovakia** they gave me his address – the address of this office, they gave me the phone number, and I called him up, that it will be done fast. I called him up, I gave him all the information. That’s what I did, and they received the papers, they received the van.

Q: A hard question about th-the – 1968. Wh-When you came to – to the **United States** for the Bar Mitzvah –

A: Wedding.

Q: – and the wedding, what was that like? You hadn’t seen your sister in 20 years.

A: It was a – you cannot imagine. We were crying, we were glad. And you know, it was a disadvantage because I didn’t speak the language. So, with the sisters I can speak Slovak or Hungarian, but all those there – all those nieces and nephews, they were children. They didn’t speak, so I had to have always a – a translator. And it was funny enough, it was – it was a joy, you know. They started to learn the – the Hungarian words, some Slovak words. So they we-were communicating. And I have really a very – very nice pictures from that.

Q: Did you talk about the war years when you came?

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A: Oh, they knew ma – very, very much so.

Q: I mean, even with your sisters again.

A: Very, very – we didn't like to talk even today about that. So, if we – if we don't – if we don't have to, here and there, it reminds us what happened, certainly, but it – not to send it that's in – that's all.

Q: Have you told anybody else about this – your experiences, have you talked about them before?

A: No, only this woman what I showed you. And I talk here about it to schools, they called me, you know, we have – we have some woman in our shul, in our synagogue who is a teacher, so she called me, and I talked to children there.

Q: What's the shul?

A: In the – in a Christian sc – in the school. In the school.

Q: Wha-What sh – what sh – what shul did – you said a woman from your shul?

A: Yeah, from **Adat Shalom**.

Q: **Adat Shalom**.

A: Yeah.

Q: What's the – who's the woman?

A: She is a teacher there in a – what – I think her – she must teach herself part-time. Her name is **Handelman**. What is her first name? **Nancy. Nancy**

Handelman.

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Q: And she's a teacher.

A: Yeah.

Q: So you've told schoolchildren about –

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: – about the experiences. You have – you have no children?

A: No.

Q: Nephews and nieces?

A: Yeah.

Q: Have you told them about **[indecipherable]**

A: Oh they know very much, oh yeah. They – they were – because their parents told them.

Q: They did tell them?

A: Oh yeah. Yeah.

Q: Is – is there anything in particular – well, you s – you said last time that yo-you had nightmares occasionally.

A: You know it's happened, I just told that the day before yesterday, my wife, just last week I was again in **Europe** and I was in **Germany**. But, I was not this kind of **Germany**, it was like after the war **Germany**. And I said – and I woke up that I was afraid that I thought some **hakenkreuzer**(ph) somewhere. And that's was all, but it was a – were only a few days ago, but for years I didn't have

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[**indecipherable**] you know. I had many some years ago, or maybe a year or so, that I was under communists in **Czechoslovakia**, that I had some dream, that I – we went – we went [**indecipherable**] for vacation, suddenly it was communism.

But –

Q: Are there experiences, or moments during the day that – that trigger memory?

A: Oh yeah, those – these come more often.

Q: What

A: The – how it was. For example, a – for example a wa – how it was actually, how come that when I was working for example, between two groups til I get two groups, and it tooks me a few days and in wintertime, just few days in winter reminds me that I went in so deep snow and helped the guy where I was staying with him to go to the forest and make wood, you know, how you call –

Q: Chop the wood.

A: Chop wood, yeah. Just came few days there to my mind in a deep snow in January. So –

Q: So you were in the partisans then?

A: Yeah [**indecipherable**] few days I left. So – but not so often, here and there. For example I was working for – a few days ago on a movie. I was looking – oh a few days ago when they – they repeat “**Schindler List**,” so I was watching it. My wife wouldn’t – she didn’t want to – to watch it a second time.

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Q: She gets upset over it.

A: Oh yes. So it comes in many times, but experiences what you cannot forget, and like I said many times, and I saw people that are not satisfied, that's this and this. And I said to her, first of all, ye – all what I met here i – one thing is the best – not what I met, what I'm say – telling them, this is the wa – the best country in the world and I'm [indecipherable] people, they don't appreciate enough that – they don't appreciate enough, they don't realize what country they were born, or wa – which country they are living. They have the opportunity to live in a country like **United States**. And I said, and I – something and someone [indecipherable] and I said, you know what? Thanks God, every morning I said thanks God, one more day alive. And if someone would tell me 1944 – '42 - '43, that I will be one day 30 years old, I would tell him he is crazy, because I was looking if next hour I will be still alive, not what will be in a few years. So I – and I talk to my wife, and she knows that, hear me tell all this, the whole, the – the main thing, to be healthy, to take the life like it goes and take advantage as much as possible, and live your normal life and that's it.

Q: And travel.

A: And travel. Oh, that's what – we like to travel, we like to go to – not – not too much to movies, but to operas, to – to ballet, we still are going even now, here and there, to Masonic Temple, to **Fox** theater. And – and museums. Every year, at

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least once a year we are going here in **Detroit** to the art museum. At least once a year we are going to the zoo. And where we just went last month, I don't know I mentioned you, it was a – actually a organin – the – our sisterhood from our shul organized to go to the historical museum here in **Detroit**. There is – there was a exhibit, how the people came to **United States** from est – I don't know how many centuries back –

Q: Immigration.

A: And the immigration. So that's – we went there because it was very interested – very interesting. And I saw there people who came to this country are the people who live, for example, mostly from **Poland**, even they showed them some from **Czechoslovakia**, and from **Hungary**. Really they showed how the people lived there and I – so I closed my eyes and I saw my li – how I lived at home in **Czechoslovakia** before the war. That's what they showed us there. So it was very entertaining, we were very glad that we enter. And now we are going, next week we are going to the art museum again, because here is a exhibit about the i – ivory exhibit there, and very **[indecipherable]** very nice. And be wi – this time we took a – a walk, even we had there many times, a little there. We like paintings that we are going in next month for three weeks with elder hostel to **Spain**, to **Barcelona** and **Madrid**, because the subject is European painting, Spanish painting and all those things. So we are **[indecipherable]** every morning is some discussions, or

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some explanation from some professionals. And then we are visiting museums, so that's what we like, and that's what we spend the money, as long as we have.

Q: Will you go back to **Prague**?

A: In September.

Q: So not with this other trip?

A: No. No, no. We are traveling a lot, so we have many times free tickets. We will have – we will have four – to – not to **Spain**, but where we go to – September to **Czechoslovakia**, we will have the fourth time, free tickets to **Europe**. Fourth time. The third time with – the third time with **Northwest**, and before – no, the second time with **Northwest**. Before – last year or year before we had **Delta**, and the first time we had years ago with pa – what does –

Q: **Pan-American**?

A: Probably it's **Pan-American**. And maybe they give too mu – and we didn't need so many miles like we need today, maybe that's why they went bankrupt.

Q: Have you been to the museum in **Washington**, the Holocaust Museum?

A: No, we – two years ago, even we paid the money to go to **Washington**, it was a group from Temple **Israel**. And we came to the airport and we couldn't go because something was wrong with the plane, so we had to go back there, and we got refi – refunds for the money, and for – but, we are planning to go. But we are on the way to go even with my sister. You know, we were –

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Q: She'll go to see that?

A: Yeah, she were in the same group and with my niece, her daughter. And we had to come back because something was wrong with the planes, they couldn't fix it. So went back **[indecipherable]**

Q: Well, I want to thank you very much for the time. **[break]**

A: I thought my – my nephew when he was at his wedding, that I kept my promise, that really I came to his wedding. Yeah, I me – I think I told that where he – and I came the the first time, he po – took out from the freezer from his Bar Mitzvah cake.

Q: No, you didn't tell me that.

A: Yeah, when I came the first time, when I came to **United States**, the first thing when I came to their house and he didn't tell me anything. Suddenly he went to the freezer there and took out a big piece of cake, it was from him, and he said, Uncle **Mitu**(ph) here I kept it by the freezer that – for you and your wife, for **Bozena**, a piece of my Bar Mitzvah cake. And I said, you see, when I had the wedding and I told his wife and him that I kept my promise, that I was here with my wife, with his aunt on his wedding.

End of Tape Five